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ABSTRACT

Written from the perspective of the Central American experience of education for fundamental social change, this booklet provides ideas and guidelines for developing popular education, a learning process based on the concept that education can serve the interests of the poor and that the people themselves can define the content and context of their education programs. Following an introduction and glossary for popular educators, a section entitled "The Fabric of Our Lives" examines the historical development of popular education in both Canada and Central America and introduces the reader to the work of the Alforja network of popular education centers. The bulk of the book is the section entitled "Some New Designs." The adaptation of four new ideas or designs from the Central American experience for use in Canada is described, including sample workshops, tools for program evaluation and analysis, and creative program designs. The final section, "Making Connections," focuses on networking among popular educators. The appendix provides further information about the kinds of activities organized by the member centers of the Alforja network. A bibliography lists additional resources. Numerous balck and white photographs, cartoons and other graphics illustrate the booklet. (KC)

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A NEW WEAVE
Popular Education in Canada and Central America

Rick Arnold, Deborah Barndt, and Bev Burke

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CREDITS

As with many popular education productions there were many minds and hands that nurtured this one along into its final form. We want to recognize the efforts of the following:

- Our readers, who reviewed the draft manuscript and offered critical comments — dian marino, D'Arcy Martin, Sue Thrasher, and especially Barb Thomas, who not only provided a thorough critique, but also gave many suggestions that have been incorporated into the final text.
- Deborah Barndt, whose photographs and photo-sequences of both Canadian and Central American experiences appear throughout the book (with credits to Rick Arnold for photo on pages 85 and 87, Cooper Institute for the photo on page 42, Frontier College for photos on pages 9-12, and Maria Giovanini for photos on pages 27 and 89.
- Erma Stultz, whose original cartoons and illustrations appear on pages 30-35 and 54-56.
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- dian marino, who designed the cover and the title pages for the three sections.
- Jorge Aliaga, who was responsible for lay-out and design, applying his creative touch to many pages.
- Wordmakers Typsetting & Graphics Inc. for the typesetting of the text.
- The Printing Department of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education responsible for the final production.

Finally, we want to acknowledge those who have inspired us and motivated us to attempt this publication in the first place:

- the struggles of the people of Central America and the popular educators, especially the regional education network, Alforja.
- the educators and organizers here in Canada who have been pioneering popular education work in Canada and who see the Central American experience as one with lessons for us all.

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Educators As Weavers

If you are...

working with a group on one of the critical issues of the day, such as peace and disarmament, unemployment, workers' rights, racism, intervention in Central America, literacy, labour, gay rights, women's issues, the environment, etc...

or...

part of an organization or social movement that's directed toward fundamental change of an unjust social system...

or...

concerned about how you get these ideas across, how people can make the links between their daily lives and these broader social forces...

or perhaps...

looking for ways to be more effective in your work: in developing a clearer analysis, in nurturing greater social consciousness among people, and in mobilizing them for more collective action...

then...

we think this booklet may be useful to you.

You may not have called yourself an *educator* and you may never have heard of the term *popular education*, but we've been thinking of people like you as we've put this material together. Because we have found popular education a useful tool in making the links between analysis and action, between personal experiences and social structures, between issues and between movements.

Popular education may be new as a term, but the idea is not new:

- that education can serve the interests of the poor and oppressed sectors:
- that education can serve the interests of the poor and oppressed sectors;
- that developing a critical consciousness is part of organizing for change;
- that people themselves can define their own content and can create their own forms of education;
- that learning can be participatory, fun, and mobilizing.

We see this new approach to education as a thread between thought and action — as an important part of a broader movement for fundamental social change. This is the *new weave* we are creating and we are working toward — and so popular educators become *weavers* in the process.

So Where Are We Starting?

There are two starting points for this production. One is Canada; the other, Central America. Each has its own social fabric, represents a particular historical context. Yet there are common threads between the two. Both Canada and Central America share an historical pattern of dependence with the United States, the dominant power between our borders.

And there are other connections between us. During the past decade, as Canadian educators, some of us have found ourselves involved in the social upheavals and transformations in Central America — through projects of development, exchange, and solidarity. In weaving new relationships with popular educators in Central America, we have looked in new ways at the social alternatives we are trying to create here in Canada. We have found ourselves reflecting on our own work as educators and thinking more deeply about how popular education can provide a thread between thought and action.

A year ago, the three of us participated in a 10-day workshop in Mexico that brought together 40 popular educators from Mexico and Central America. It was the annual gathering of Alforja, a network of popular education centres that for five years has coordinated the development of this work in the region. Now, a year later, as this publication goes to press, two members of the Alforja network are visiting Canada, and participating in exchanges among popular educators in different parts of our own country. The ongoing exchange between Canadian and Central American educators is another special part of this *new weave*, which has taken on an international texture, as we've discovered that we have a common vision: for social justice and equality.

And where are we going...?

There is a special pattern to the design of this booklet, and it reflects the three sections and objectives of the publication:

The first section, *The Fabric of our Lives*, examines the historical development of popular education in both Canada and Central America. The two contexts are compared for similarities and differences. We are introduced to the work of the Alforja network of popular education centres. This analysis of the social contexts within which we work provides a backdrop for the rest of the book. We can't focus on our educational work, the link between thought and action, without locating that work within the total social fabric. And that includes both what we've inherited as our social reality, and the new weave we are working to create.

The bulk of the book is the second section: *Some New Designs*. It invites us to examine in more detail just how popular education can be that creative thread — contributing to the new weave. We have selected four new ideas or designs from the Central American experience and tried to adapt them for use in Canada. These are practical tools for our work:

- a *learning loom* which provides a framework for designing educational events which will respond to the needs of participants, help them think more critically, and prepare them more strategically for action;

- two new ways of doing social analysis: one through intersectoral monthly meetings, the other using the *Social Tree*, an analytical tool for identifying economic, political, and ideological aspects of any social structure or change process;

- a method for developing creative program designs within workshops that can be used outside in our organizational and community work;

- new ways of doing old tasks, showing how we can constantly create variations on a design or technique to make our educational work more engaging and effective.

Underlying all of these new designs is one common pattern: the theoretical/ideological base, or *other way of thinking* that is being generated in applying a popular education methodology. So these tools, though practical, are presented in terms of a common theoretical perspective and ideological position.

In the smaller, final section, *Making Connections*, we refocus on our own task as educators in Canada. We want the examination of the Central American experience and the reflection on our own work to mobilize us to action. The Alforja network is one model of how popular educators can unite, share analyses, exchange methodologies, develop a clearer theory, and coordinate strategic work. But the critical question is how can we develop our own forms of ongoing exchange, a network that fits our social context and furthers our work. It is for us to create those forms, and this booklet aims to encourage the process.

After the three sections, there is a bibliography that will lead you to other related publications and groups developing similar ideas and actions. And the appendix provides further information about the kinds of activities organized by the member centres of the Alforja network.

In reviewing this brief sketch of the content of the booklet, you may note yet another underlying design:

- We start with our own experiences of popular education in both Canada and Central America.

- Grounded in that practice, we examine the theory and methodology of popular education, drawing from Central America developments that can enrich our own practice.

- Finally, we return to reflect on that practice, and ask how we can best organize ourselves. This movement from practice to theory to practice, or between action and reflection, is, in fact, the basic methodological principle of popular education.

The thread in this publication is the use of popular education for social change. And so we bring new meaning now to our title, *A New Weave*. We want to explore the link between education and organizing, the links between educators working in different sectors and for various issues, but toward a similar vision of a more just society. And we see that *new weave* as knowing no borders; thus, the link between popular educators in Canada with those in Central America becomes another important means of strengthening our work for social change.

Perhaps we should be clear about the focus and the limitations of **A New Weave:**

- It **does not** promise you a technique to use in every educational challenge you face.
- It **does** introduce new techniques but in the context of thinking critically about the methodology and ideology underlying our work.
- It **does** draw heavily on the Central American experience and particularly the work of the Alforja network of popular educators.
- It **does not** bring together all the rich popular education developments going on in Canada.

We recognize this last weakness, but see it rather as a challenge to all of us to break out of our isolation, to share and analyze the work we've been doing in different sectors and around different issues. We see this book as a kind of organizing tool for us as Canadian popular educators, so that the *next* publication will reflect a genuine exchange of our *own* growing work in this field.

How Can We Use This

We hope that this material can stimulate reflection among you who are engaged constantly in this kind of educational work. And that you might draw some new ideas or designs from it, and recreate them for your own use. The first section is perhaps more for study, while the second and third suggest application and action. As you read this booklet you may want to consider its use for collective analysis in a group you are part of.

There is a feedback form at the back of the book that asks for your input. We want to know not only what you found useful, but also how you would propose that we build a network of popular educators in Canada. Send us your ideas.

POPULAR EDUCATORS' DICTIONARY

POPULAR EDUCATION	education that serves the interests of popular classes (exploited sectors of society), that involves them in critically analyzing their social situation and in organizing to act collectively to change the oppressive conditions of their lives
DIALECTICAL METHODOLOGY	a process of education that starts with the daily experience of people (practice), helps them to critically analyze that experience (theory) so that they can collectively act to change their situation (practice); the relationship between practice/theory/practice is thus intimate, dialectical, ongoing
PRAXIS	the dynamic integration of action and reflection, of word and work
LEARNING LOOM	a systematic framework for designing and implementing educational activities like workshops; it includes: 1) a vertical dimension that guides the planning group in designing a process that starts with the experiences of the participants, moves them step by step through a process of analyzing them to develop a more theoretical understanding of their practice, leading them back to applying that new and more critical understanding to changing or improving their practice. 2) a horizontal dimension that helps the planning group clearly articulate the objectives, themes, activities, techniques, resources, persons responsible, and time involved in the particular learning activity (i.e., the what, why, how, with what, who, and when of any educational event)
OBJECTIVE	what is to be accomplished through a particular educational activity, related to a selected theme
THEORY	the overall conception or scientific interpretation, view of the world
METHOD	the educational approach, or form, chosen to meet the objective, that helps develop a particular theme
TECHNIQUES	tools used to develop the theme in applying the chosen method and accomplishing the stated objectives
PROCEDURE	the steps involved in using the technique in a particular workshop or learning event
NAMINC THE POLITICAL MOMENT, OR *CONJUNCTURAL ANALYSIS*	a critical analysis of the current situation, the interplay of economic, political, and ideological forces at a given moment, and how one country, sector, or organization fits into the global process.

..THE FABRIC OF OUR LIVES..

LOOKING FOR OUR ROOTS

The challenge of the 1980's

A group of popular educators who work within the women's movement, trade unions, the peace and environmental movements, various solidarity networks, native, community and church organizations sit down to discuss their problems. As they talk many educators are surprised at the number of common questions which emerge:

How can we involve more than just a small core of people in the day-to-day running of the organizations making up our movements?
With a conservative mood prevalent throughout North America, where will many of us obtain funding for our work as government monies dry up?
How will we handle being labelled when our work leads to questioning of the dominant world view?
How do we relate to the emphasis placed in most education programming on competition rather than cooperation?
Given resistance, even within our organizations, to educational approaches that seek to build a more critical consciousness, what new ways can we find to put our work forward to our members and the public?

The group also identified as a problem a formidable and increasingly pervasive *educator* — the media. The massive educational impact of the world view put forward by the media on the consciousness of the Canadian public has serious implications for popular education work:

It affects the image others have of the people with whom we work — trade unionists, Central Americans, sole support mothers, native people and all the others.

It affects our understanding of each other — and divides us, as trade unionists learn to stereotype native people, who learn to stereotype Central Americans.....

As popular educators we realize that we have limited resources and cannot compete with the amount of information being presented to people by the mass media. So what **can** we do?

The group decides to turn this obstacle into a possibility:

We can eliminate the banking *approach to education which for too long has characterized many of our issue oriented movements, in favour of an educational approach which builds from the bottom up and names the world as we see it, not as others would have us believe it is.*

We can help people develop the skills to critically analyze what the media conveys and how it shapes our thinking

We can also **learn** *from the mass media and more creatively put together our information so as to appeal to a wide audience. However, unlike the media, our objective would be an informed critical consciousness leading to collective strategies for action.*

Does some of this sound familiar? It should — because you, the *reader*, and we, *the writers* form part of this group of educators. And like them, we have already made a beginning in facing the challenges of the 1980's. We have recognized the connections between education and organizing efforts and real social change. We have identified the need for coalition building among the organizations we represent. We have also begun to identify common problems and to tackle them jointly. By strengthening popular education work, we are ensuring that as educators we will have a role to play in the making of a new political, social, cultural and economic agenda for Canada.

Where do we look for lessons which can help us collectively address the challenges facing popular education work in Canada?

This booklet suggests that one source might be the experiences of educators in others countries. Later on we want to share with you some exciting breakthroughs in popular education in Central America which offer ideas for work here. But first, it is important to look back at our own history. How have Canadian educators connected their work to social movements in the past? What obstacles did they face and how did they tackle them?

LOOKING FOR OUR ROOTS

Learning from our own history

What is the story behind education for social change in Canada? We face our first obstacle as we search for some record of that work. There certainly isn't much about it in our history books. The reform movements that threatened to change the status quo barely get a mention. Even less is said about the organizers associated with those movements whose grass roots work provoked a rethinking of the relationship between adult education and social change. Yet Canada does have a rich, if hidden, history of organizing efforts and educational programming which remains to be uncovered and documented. This search for our roots is work we all need to do. What follows is a modest beginning....

At the turn of this century, Canada still functioned as a resource outpost for European markets, although we were fast becoming a major supplier of raw materials for our growing industrial neighbour south of the border. To be sure, Canada did have its own industrial and financial elite who had a large hand in shaping the political directions which would ensure the continuing, profitable relations to foreign markets for their own companies. Mining and logging enterprises had for some time been concentrating workers in one place in order to extract or harvest raw materials. Working conditions in the mining, logging and bush camps were harsh and wages low. Some workers began

to question their role as the creators of wealth for a few families in far off cities. The northern camps provided a potential for group discussion and education, fertile ground for the more radical ideas which came to Canada early in the twentieth century.

One of the first attempts to take advantage of the educational opportunity offered by the camps was a basic education program for workers begun in 1902 under the aegis of a newly formed institution called Frontier College.* Frontier College developed a program in conjunction with university students who would volunteer to spend time teaching in the northern camps. It was a formative experience for many of the young volunteer educators who truly believed that they were providing camp workers with an education they would otherwise be denied. An important result of the Frontier College program was the evolution towards a labourer-teacher model where the young volunteers worked side by side with men in the camps, trying to establish a different relationship between *teacher* and *student*. However, over the years some of the dignitaries on the Frontier College board began to see the courses as a way of combatting the spread of radical influences through the teaching of *Canadian values* to a camp population which they identified as predominately *foreign*.

Experiments with education as a form of social control were part of other early Canadian adult education programs. A second example of this type of programming was the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) founded in Ontario in 1918. Begun by the province's educational elite, WEA tutorials enthusiastically promoted ties to the Empire and stressed that workers should acquire *the knowledge which is essential to intelligent and effective citizenship* through instruction in *responsible* behaviour.* However, the leaders of some of the craft unions to which these tutorials were directed, eventually managed to gain a measure of control over the WEA and its programs, although, up until the late 1940's, the University of Toronto's Extension Department retained its position as a funding conduit, able to suggest professors for the worker courses. In response to the tremendous growth of industrial unionism in the late 1930's and 1940's, the Association's courses shifted away from the liberal arts to a more innovative labour education

*See Alfred Fitzpatrick, **The University in Overalls: A Plea for Part-Time Study**, University of Toronto, 1923; Eric Wilfred Robinson, **The History of Frontier College**, M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1960.

*Ian Radford and Joan Sangster, **A Link Between Labour and Learning**: — the WEA in Ontario 1917-1951, Labour #8/9, Autumn '81, Spring '82, p.47.

program with an emphasis on more practical subjects and topics for study, which some WEA members saw as clearly advancing the cause of the working class. Alarmed by courses promoting class consciousness, some members of the academic elite in control of the University's Extension Department cut their ties with the Association in 1948. However, the chief cause of the WEA's decline in the early 1950's came from within the labour movement. Certain labour leaders, using Cold War tactics, launched attacks on the Association, opposing a labour educational institution which they could not control.

However, the WEA's pathbreaking efforts in labour education and research have served as useful models for future trade union education programmes.

In the early part of the twentieth century, much of Canada's population was still dependent on agriculture. Although organizing efforts in Canada's rural areas were made more difficult by the great distances which often existed between one farm and another, the ravages of the depression years provided a context which helped galvanize a rural reform movement. Reformers in the 1930's and 1940's used education to further farmers' economic interests and to encourage them to push politicians to enact legislative changes. One innovation which drew farm families together to discuss their common problems and propose alternatives was the radio. In conjunction with the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the *National Farm Radio Forum* was begun, at one point in 1949-1950 reaching 1,600 forums with almost 21,000 participants.* For a few short years, radio's potential for education and *two way* communication on a massive scale was being realized as rural people discussed the causes of some of their problems and took action to remedy them. A prime mover behind these farm forums was the CAAE, begun in 1935 with members from both elite voluntary associations (the Association of Canadian Clubs, the Canadian League etc.) and the rural reform movements on its Board. Corporate opposition to the CAAE's outreach program began to grow as *controversial* topics were presented for discussion in the forums. Faced with this mounting criticism and a drop in corporate donations, the CAAE invited the President of the Royal Bank of Canada, James Muir, to become the Association's President in 1950. Muir succeeded in bringing a degree of financial security to the CAAE but he also used his position to attack the radio forums. With the strength of the rural reform movement sapped by the growing exodus from farm to city, social movement activists gradually withdrew from the CAAE and the radio forums slowly died out. However, they left behind a reminder of the potential use of media to promote grass roots participation in shaping policy directions for the nation.

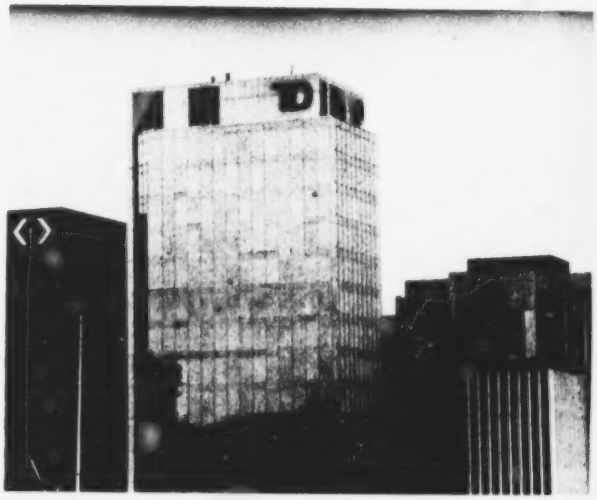
*Ron Faris, **the Passionate Educators**, Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1975, p. 100.

The harsh conditions faced by many Canadians during the depression provoked another initiative — the Antigonish Movement, established in 1932 and operating out of St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. The Antigonish Movement built up a number of adult study groups among local fishermen, farmers and miners. Although these study groups were encouraged to act cooperatively to solve some of their most pressing economic problems, many of the leaders of this movement saw *cooperativism* as a bulwark against the spread of more radical concepts. It is important to note that these study groups developed discussion techniques which often successfully engaged the participation of local people around questions such as the establishment of cooperatives and credit unions as a way to redress economic and social injustices. Although much of the earlier reformist zeal has gone out of the Antigonish Movement, its attempt to link education with the formulation of economic alternatives for working people is an example from which we can learn.

Before we move into a time period which many more of us are familiar with, it is perhaps important to comment briefly on the 1950's. In the years following the Second World War, there was widespread optimism that an era of plenty was dawning, fuelled by the upsurge in entrepreneurial activities. Just as people were being asked to put their faith in the free enterprise system, the televised McCarthy trials and the Korean war began to impress upon public consciousness that *communism* (and no longer *fascism*) threatened to crush all hope for a brighter future. McCarthyism destroyed the lives and careers of a number of independent thinkers in the United States and it also *scared* many Canadians into identifying dissenters, as agents of the Kremlin's *evil designs*. *Labelling* and *red baiting* are not only still prevalent today, but are also being fanned by some of the conservative governments presently in power. In addition, we are currently witnessing a return to a belief that the *engine of growth*, an unbridled free enterprise system, will solve all of our problems.

The 1960's and 1970's: Changing context and new challenges

As most of us are aware, many of the societal problems we now face were created by the very system some continue to claim will be our salvation. By the mid 1960's, it was becoming increasingly apparent to many people that the growing concentration of corporate power at home and the extension of transnational company activities into Third World countries was only benefitting a privileged few. The vast majority of Third World people and many Canadians experienced a deterioration in their economic prospects as well as in the quality of their lives. New industries attracted large numbers of people to our cities but the *system* was not geared to handle the attendant community problems such as inadequate provision of basic services and unscrupulous landlords charging high rents. It was up to community members themselves to organize and demand improvements. Most community organizing and education efforts in this time period remained closely linked to local neighbourhood issues with relatively few regional and national links. One national program, the Company of Young Canadians (CYC) became quite well known in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The CYC dispatched young people to communities across the country to help organize around pressing problems people were facing. The CYC received a good deal of its funding from the Federal government, who eventually pulled the plug when it became clear that many of the participants in the program were becoming radicalized by their experiences. The example of the CYC (which did not survive the funding cuts) raises many important questions for popular educators, including the limitations of relying on government funding for our education and organizing efforts, as well as the role of outsiders in education and organizing work.



The corporate model of development for Canada has adversely affected the lives of people from all parts of the country. The rush of large resource companies to exploit mineral, timber or oil resources on Indian lands provoked not only a growing native response but also a southern support network to help defeat such mega projects as the MacKenzie Valley pipeline. Chemicals used in industrial processes have traditionally been selected because they cut costs and enhance profits. The environment hardly figured into the calculations. Mercury pollution, acid rain and PCB's are issues on which organizing and public education efforts past and present have focused to make corporations assume more responsibility for the damage they do.

Since World War II, we have entered the Nuclear age which threatens a grizzly end to the entire human race. Ban the bomb rallies in the 1960's reflected public awareness that the survival stakes were being raised. This threat of nuclear annihilation spawned a movement dedicated to the peace issue which has used a variety of creative approaches to alert public opinion to the dangers that could lie ahead. The Vietnam War itself was a milestone in oppositional activity as tens of thousands of anti-war activists took to the streets in Canada as well as in the USA. Organizing continues today against growing U.S. involvement in Central America, the Cruise Missile and Reagan's Star Wars initiative.

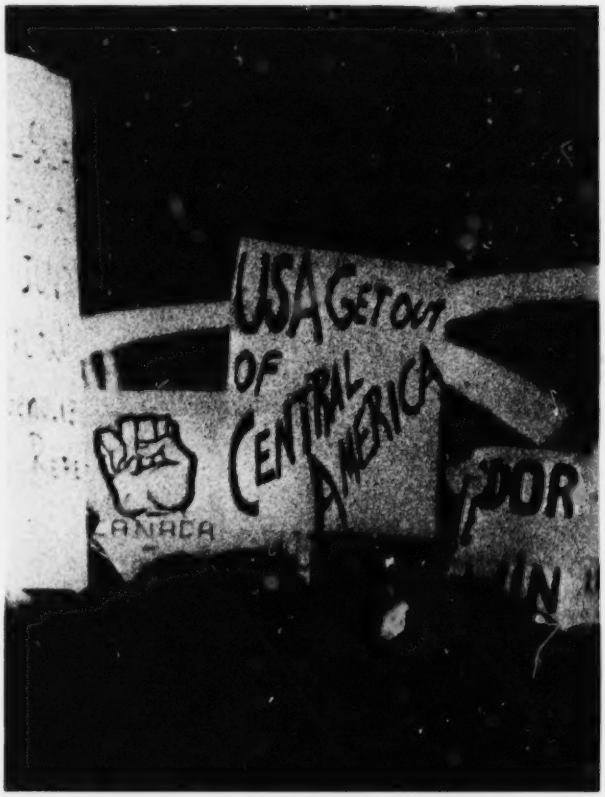
Increased international travel possibilities for Canadians and more direct contact with Third World people have played an important part in solidarity movements focused on Southern Africa and Latin America. There is a new *global* awareness around questions of development, trade and aid. There are calls for greater self-determination for Third World Countries coupled with non-exploitative relations which will begin to address the man-made scourge of poverty. As in the case of other issues and movements, development educators have generated a great deal of research, organizing and creative education designed to replace the corporate agenda with one that comes from the grass roots.

Since the 1960's, there has been a great deal of organizing and consciousness-raising work undertaken by women around issues of concern to them. As more and more women begin to write and rewrite history, we are beginning to uncover previous feminist struggles for the vote and equal treatment. More recently, as women begin to see more options outside of the home, questions of power and control in today's society have led to a growing feminist consciousness and an upsurge in the strength of the women's movement. Feminist thought has begun to strongly influence alternative visions of how society could be organized and in whose interests it should be developed.

The issue orientation of many of the movements which were born in the last quarter century raises a number of key questions for educators working for social change. Organizers within these movements have been able to turn out an impressively large number of people for a demonstration. However, after initial concessions are won, the strength of the movements often wanes as people return to *everyday* life, believing the problem they protested is being addressed by the proper authorities. How can education for critical consciousness complement and support organizing efforts: — to ensure that a greater number of people see the connections among the many issues we need to address?

Many of the movements alive today draw heavily on the middle class for support. What does this mean for popular educators who see themselves supporting grass roots social transformation? Many of us have middle class rather than working class backgrounds.

In addition, some of us work outside the institutional context of the popular groups and organizations we are trying to support. We need to rethink the role of the outsider in relation to local education initiatives so as not to repeat some of the mistakes made during the 1960's and 1970's.



Solidarity and development education work have put international issues on the Canadian agenda. Relating those issues to local concerns is a challenge which has only recently begun to be addressed in popular education programs.

This brief look at our history points to continuing problems and suggests new possibilities as we move into the 1980's. Let's move on now to look at what we can learn from the experience of Central American educators as we try to collectively respond to the challenges we face.

THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT

In this booklet we want to introduce you to some fellow educators from Central America and the exciting work they've been doing. But first, a few words about the term *popular education* and how the concept has evolved in the Latin American context.

What is Popular Education?

Educación Popular or Popular Education, forms part of a current in Adult Education which has often been described as *education for critical consciousness*. Popular Education is called *popular* because its priority is to work among the many rural and urban poor who form the vast majority of the world's people, particularly in Third World countries. It is a collective or group process of education where the teacher and students learn together, beginning with the concrete experience of the participants, leading to reflection on that experience in order to effect positive change. Some of the characteristics of popular education are summarized in the accompanying box

Popular Education

- everyone teaches; everyone learns
- the starting point is the concrete experience of the learner
- involves a high level of participation
- is a collective effort
- is an ongoing process (not limited to a workshop)
- leads to action for change
- stresses the creation of new knowledge
- causes us to reflect on what we've done to improve what we are going to do
- strengthens the ability of people to organize themselves
- links local experiences to historical and global processes
- and it's fun!

The 1960s — Brazil

Popular Education as a concept in widespread use is barely twenty years old, tracing its roots back to Brazil in the 1960s and the literacy training programs of an educator called Paulo Freire. In contrast to the traditional education system coming from colonial times, which taught those Latin Americans with access to it to accept the world view of a small elite, Freire's students learned to read and write through discussion of basic problems they themselves were experiencing such as no access to agricultural land. As the causes of their problems became clear, the students analysed and discussed what joint action could be taken to change their situation. The term used for this process by Freire of action/reflection/action was *conscientization* — and it led participants not only to acquire new literacy skills, but also to understand their own reality so as to be able to change it. Brazil's military coup in 1964 put an end to Freire's work there, but the seeds of a new concept of education had been sown.

The 1970s — South America

During the 1970s, popular education was shaped by the growth of mass-based movements for social change in South America, leading to the expansion and enrichment of the methodology developed by Freire. In these years, popular education took a clear *option for the poor*, as a methodology designed to help people develop the skills needed to organize and take more control over their own lives. Grassroots organizations began their own education programs, often calling for support from popular education centres which began to appear during those years. They trained leaders and promoted theatre and musical groups, effectively opening up new avenues of involvement for people in their activities. But in the face of an increasingly mobilized population, hard-line dictatorships were set up by the mid-1970s in most South American countries, dedicated to keeping things as they were.

In the 1980s — Central America

Nicaraguan mothers greet their sons and daughters, volunteer teachers returning from the five-month Literacy Project.

Popular Education methodology is again making new strides — this time in Central America and especially in Nicaragua, where the new Sandinista government is encouraging the population to actively participate in shaping its own destiny. A massive literacy crusade drawing on 100,000 volunteers taught 400,000 people how to read and write, reducing the rate of illiteracy from 51% to 12% in just 6 months. The continuing adult education program drawing on 24,000 former literacy students as the teachers,

ensures that literacy skills will not be lost, and also builds new skills in such areas as basic accounting, nutrition and setting up cooperatives. The popular health campaign trained thousands of Nicaraguans to develop education and action programs designed to eliminate killer diseases such as malaria. Within the grassroots organizations, such as the neighbourhood committees and the women's organization, popular education methodology is being creatively adapted to meet the needs of the new society Nicaragua is trying to create.

Four years of counter-revolutionary activities against Nicaragua have also left their mark on popular education, while underlining its resiliancy. Popular educators who live and work in the war zones continue the follow-up to the literacy crusade although they often have to bury their workbooks so that marauding contra bands won't find them and kill those involved in the adult education programs. Agricultural production is increasingly important not only to feed the nation but also to generate foreign exchange in the face of the economic blockade by the United States. The agrarian reform program has increasingly utilized popular education approaches to engage rural workers and small farmers in creatively moulding a new economic model, which will strengthen the revolutionary process they fought so hard to bring about.

Conditions for popular educators in other Central American countries contrast sharply with those in Nicaragua. With no mass movements directing education efforts and little state support, popular educators in Costa Rica and Panama for example, face obstacles to their work which are readily understandable to Canadian educators. Popular educators in those two countries work with sectors whose very survival is threatened by the severe austerity measures required by foreign creditors such as banks and the International Monetary Fund. Unemployment and underemployment levels are provoking a growing number of strikes and protest marches. Costa Rica and Panama are also becoming key pawns in the U.S. game plan to isolate and then destroy the example of

the Nicaraguan revolution. The elected governments in both countries are under increasing pressure to allow more use of their territory for U.S. military purposes and the building of a better *climate* for foreign investors. This *climate* requires the muzzling of potential oppositional forces, using the media to paint those who would raise their voice in protest with a red brush. These sometimes complex set of factors are not so dissimilar to those being faced by Canadian educators in the more conservative climate here in the mid 1980's.

In Honduras, there is a history of trade union and campesino organizing efforts. However, these groups now face increasing repression as the U.S. tries to turn their country into a launching pad from which insurgency or revolution in neighbouring countries, such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, can be combatted. The U.S. marines and Honduran soldiers want to ensure that the population remains passive and comes to accept their country's new role as a U.S. fortress. Accordingly, deaths and disappearances are rapidly rising in a country nominally headed by an elected civilian government, and meetings of workers and campesinos are actively discouraged. Popular education efforts under these conditions are carried out with security considerations paramount.

We have looked briefly at the history of popular education in our own context and that of Central America. Before introducing you to those popular educators we've promised, let's take a moment more to reflect on some of the differences and similarities between *our* situation and *theirs*.

In El Salvador and Guatemala, the more authoritarian military-dominated governments deal ruthlessly with any signs of resistance. In each of those countries, an armed opposition has formed precisely because all previous efforts at social reforms have been brutally dealt with by the military. Inside El Salvador and Guatemala in areas controlled by the opposition forces, literacy campaigns and popular health programs are being carried out despite the severe limitations imposed by war conditions. In other parts of those countries, any education program comes under close scrutiny with gatherings of more than two people seen as a potentially subversive act by the authorities and dealt with accordingly. Increasingly, popular education programs to build skills and help deal with a new situation are being offered in refugee camps to recent arrivals from the military's *pacification* programs. A history of organizing and struggle has led to the voice of the traditionally poor and powerless being raised throughout most of Central America, a voice strong-arm governments in the region and their backer, the Reagan administration, would like to be able to silence.

Clearly there are many differences between what people face on a daily basis in Canada and what most people are up against in the Central American context. The development of native civilizations in the Americas has shown some different patterns and the ensuing *New World* settlements were carried out by a variety of European colonial powers with differing degrees of subtlety. These historical differences have left their mark on the subsequent development patterns in the countries of North and South America. Industrialization occurred earlier and much more rapidly in the U.S.A. and Canada than it did in the much smaller economies of Central America with raw materials from the latter fueling much of the growth further north. More wealth has been accumulated in North America, and although those who already had the most have benefited most, a noticeable middle class has formed.

This has made the visible contradictions between rich and poor less evident in Canada than in Central American countries. Also the use of force to control popular aspirations has been much more evident under the authoritarian military regimes protecting the interests of a wealthy few in Central America, than it has been under the more benign form of electoral democracy prevalent here. Consequently, Canadians and Central Americans have often used some different strategies in their struggle to ensure fundamental social change.

However, there are many historical, economic and political elements which link us. Both Canada and Central American nations were conquered and settled by European colonial powers. One result is that native peoples both North and South share a desire to get back lands which are rightfully theirs while trying to maintain those vestiges of their culture which still exist. Later, as the grip of the colonial powers on the *New World* slackened, a new power moved to establish its right to direct the affairs of the people on this continent. Basing its actions on unilateral declarations such as the 1823 Munroe Doctrine which sought to create a *natural* belief in the *sphere of influence* in the Americas, the United States cast a long shadow over both Canada and the nations of Central America. More recently, it has become only *natural* and *right* that the U.S.'s transnational corporations should invest wherever the biggest profits could be turned. Capital has gone into exploiting the raw resources of the U.S.'s neighbours both to the North and South. The United States has had a seemingly insatiable appetite for resources such as minerals or agricultural products which it further elaborates and sells back to us at ten times the cost. This economic system knows no national boundaries and has become a major influence on the pattern of economic development both in Central America and in Canada.

As a world power, the U.S. is one of the actors involved in pushing us all towards the brink of military action and ultimately nuclear annihilation. The curious logic being used that of arming to the teeth in order to bring about peace, has never proven successful before, and this time it could prove to be terminal. A similar curious logic seems to guide the Reagan administration's relations with Central America. Here the U.S. is arguing that the selling of more arms to the region's military will hasten 'democracy'. However, this policy so far has had the reverse effect of further punishing the vast majority of people who want an end to the ruthless domination by those few wealthy interests who rely on well-armed soldiers to protect their lucrative investments.

Americans doing popular education in Nicaragua

Here we are at the gates of the U.S. embassy in Managua, introducing our show of the week "All 'Bout Commies" — starring Jean Kirkpatrick and ... Ronald Reagan...?

Thank you, thank you, Harry ... Today we present a lesson in world history. You will see behind me the list of countries that we have been able to save from the scourge of communism...

In defense of democracy, we have responded faithfully for over a century in all of these places. And we've been quite successful, I might add.

So, did you get that, boys and girls? Today's history lesson brings us right up to the present — and to Central America where, once again, we are stamping out communism in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, in Guatemala ... And, where will we be tomorrow?

Tune in next week...

INTRODUCING ALFORJA* — A POPULAR EDUCATION NETWORK IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The friends we'd like you to meet are from Alforja, a regional coordinating network which serves six member popular education centres in Central America and Mexico. (See Appendix I) These national centres began the Alforja initiative in 1980 and since then many other groups with similar objectives have become loosely affiliated. The Alforja office is in Costa Rica and has a small, coordinating team of educators who work to support programs in the region. The network concept has added a further dimension to the work of all its members by providing them a unique opportunity to both record and reflect on their educational experiences via periodic regional workshops. In this way, member organizations learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses and have the chance to improve their collective educational practice.

*Alforja is Spanish for *saddle bags*, a key part of a peasant's gear which holds all the important tools for a day's work. It reminds us as educators that we have to keep the tools of our trade close at hand!

Who do they work with?

The Alforja members work primarily with peasants and workers in the isthmus. There has also been considerable work done in urban *barrios* (communities) and with native people, women's groups and the grassroots church. The criteria for deciding which groups to work with include:

- that it be an organized group
- that there is a commitment to ongoing popular education work (not one-shot deals)
- that the methodological training can be passed on to others

What does the coordinating team do?

The coordinating team of educators based in Costa Rica has four priority areas for its work:

- training in popular education methodology of leaders who can train others
- direct educational support of grassroots organizations
- research and analysis of historical and cultural roots of popular groups
- production of educational materials both written and audio-visual

The main functions of the permanent team are research, training and development of theory as well as the systematic recording and evaluation of education programs in the region along with a reflection process on the over-all direction of these programs. The guiding purpose for the work of both the permanent team and the member centres is the development of skills and awareness among community leaders that will strengthen the organization of popular groups. This is basically the *multiplier effect*: by working with leaders of existing organizations, Alforja can be sure that popular education methodology will reach a greater number of people and can be put to the service of grassroots groups. In addition, the permanent team plays a coordinating and consulting role with the network as it facilitates a continual exchange among member centres by helping to organize workshops, by supporting key projects in different countries and by serving as a clearing house for materials.

Our most recent experiences with the Alforja network

In May of 1984, we attended a ten day workshop in Mexico with the Alforja popular education network which was designed both as a reflection/evaluation of past work and as a creativity session to collectively produce new materials and techniques for the future. All three of us had been invited by Alforja to the workshop with our participation seen as an opportunity for an exchange between Canadian and Central American educators. The workshop offered a unique opportunity to learn from the reflective-/creative process of the fifty educators who participated. We were excited by the approach and stimulated to reflect on our own work in Canada discussing ways to share some of our learnings with others here. This booklet is one attempt to share that experience — and will form part of a growing body of literature which has been produced as a result of past exchanges. (See Appendix for list of resources and publications). A second project which grew out of our time in Mexico was an exchange with 2 members of the Alforja network who came to Canada in May/June 1985. They helped facilitate regional workshops in Manitoba, B.C. and Ontario, getting to know something of the problems/possibilities we face as educators in Canada. They also shared many of their rich experiences with us. So now that you know what motivated us to put this booklet together, let's take a look at some new designs which may prove useful to our future work.

...SOME NEW DESIGNS...

When we asked some fellow educators to read and critique the draft material for us, we had comments on this section which we'd like to share.

"Where is the Canadian material?" they asked.
"You need more Canadian program examples."

And they're right, we thought. There are a lot of exciting *new designs* which popular educators here in Canada have produced.

Some of them have been *sytematized* — written up so they can be shared with others.* GATT-Fly, for example, has produced a booklet outlining the **Ah-Hah Seminar** method, which we highly recommend for those looking for new ways to engage people in structural analysis. The Steelworkers Union has developed a manual called **Facing Management** which includes exciting new ideas — both techniques (for introductions, creative use of role play etc.) as well as a well-researched and tested methodology for working with some of the most pressing issues facing trade unionists in Canada. The Cross-Cultural Communication Centre has developed a course for workers on **Combatting Racism in the Workplace**, which uses case studies developed by the workers themselves. The Women's Network project in Nanaimo, British Columbia, produced a series of booklets outlining a popular education methodology and creative ideas and techniques for use with women's groups and issues. There are many other publications, and a wealth of materials as yet unpublished, which have been developed by Canadian popular educators. What this Chapter hopes to do is **complement** the work being done in Canada by sharing some new ideas and approaches we learned from popular educators in Central America. As three Canadians fortunate enough to have had access to the Central American experience, we see the addition of this material as a contribution we can make to the rich development of a **Canadian** popular education methodology.

*See the bibliography for details on these and other publications.

ANOTHER WAY OF THINKING

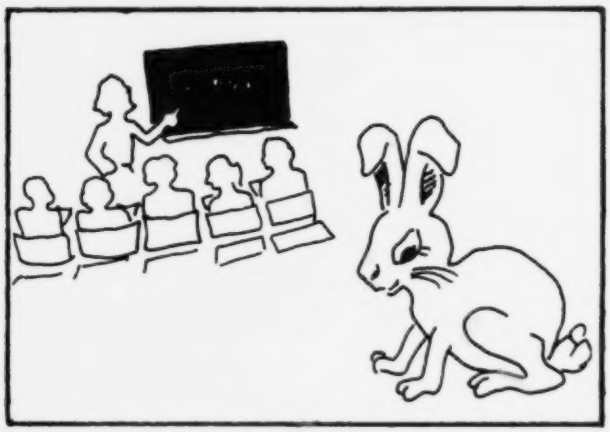
Let's consider our own experiences with education for a moment:

How many of us went through public school feeling that our daily lives, thoughts, and feelings were an important part of the curriculum?

How many of us developed in school a clearer understanding of the structural causes of social problems?

How many of us developed both analytical and organizational skills through formal education?

How many of us left school with a clear sense of how we could get involved in actions that wold help make the world better for all people?



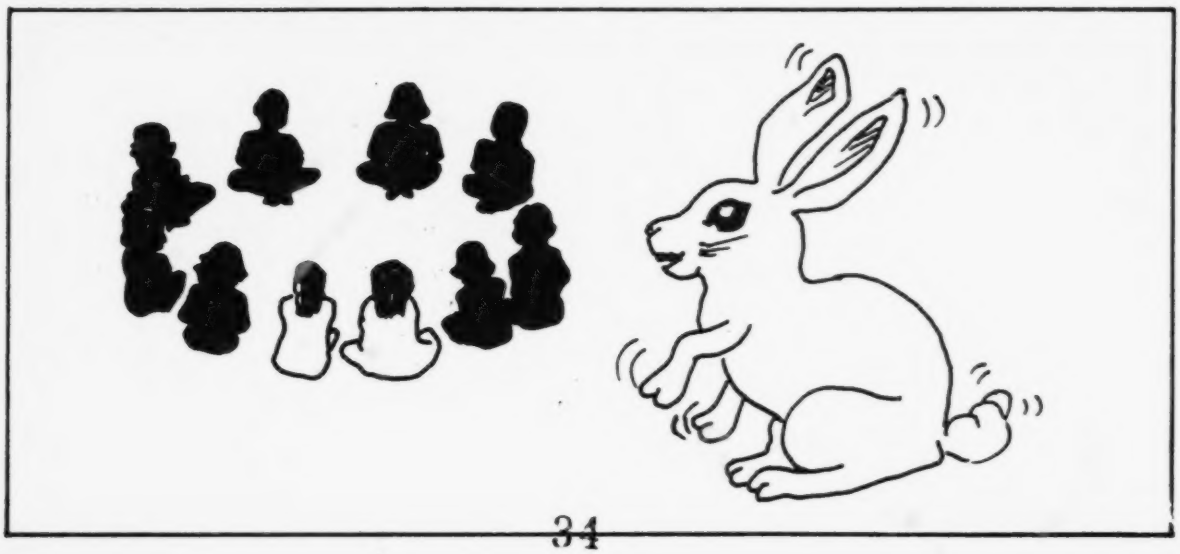
Well, it's probably easy for most of us to answer these questions, because most of us had similar experiences in a formal education system; one that often taught us things that had little relevance to our lives, that rarely valued our own experience as learning, that gave us few analytical tools to examine the structural causes of issues, and that didn't necessarily develop our organizational capacity to do something about injustice in the world. So most of us just dismiss that common cultural experience, and chalk it up to the fact that education in all societies is designed to perpetuate the prevailing economic and political system.

But what about those of us who have gotten involved in organizations and social movements that are challenging the unfairness of that system? Whether we work in development education or the women's movement, with labour unions or church groups, for solidarity or anti-nuclear issues, we have found ourselves involved in another kind of education — one that attempts to unlearn what we've all be ingrained with through formal schooling, to re-educate our fellow citizens in a new way of thinking and acting.

Let's think about our present efforts in this less formal education, then. Perhaps we're no longer in classrooms with teachers and books that impose a dominant view on us, but what have we replaced that model with?

How many educational events have we participated in that took our experiences and perceptions into account in the planning?

How many educational experiences have we had that helped us to develop analytical skills and tools that we could use in an ongoing way?



How many presentations or workshops have we left with a clear idea of how we can apply what we've learned? with a specific action plan.?

Now it is harder to dismiss these events as irrelevant. Because many of us are also involved in organizing them. Yet we have few alternative models to draw upon, and so we often unconsciously revert to the more familiar, less relevant way of doing things that we learned in school. Or we grab on to any new ideas or techniques that come our way, without being clear about where we're going with them.

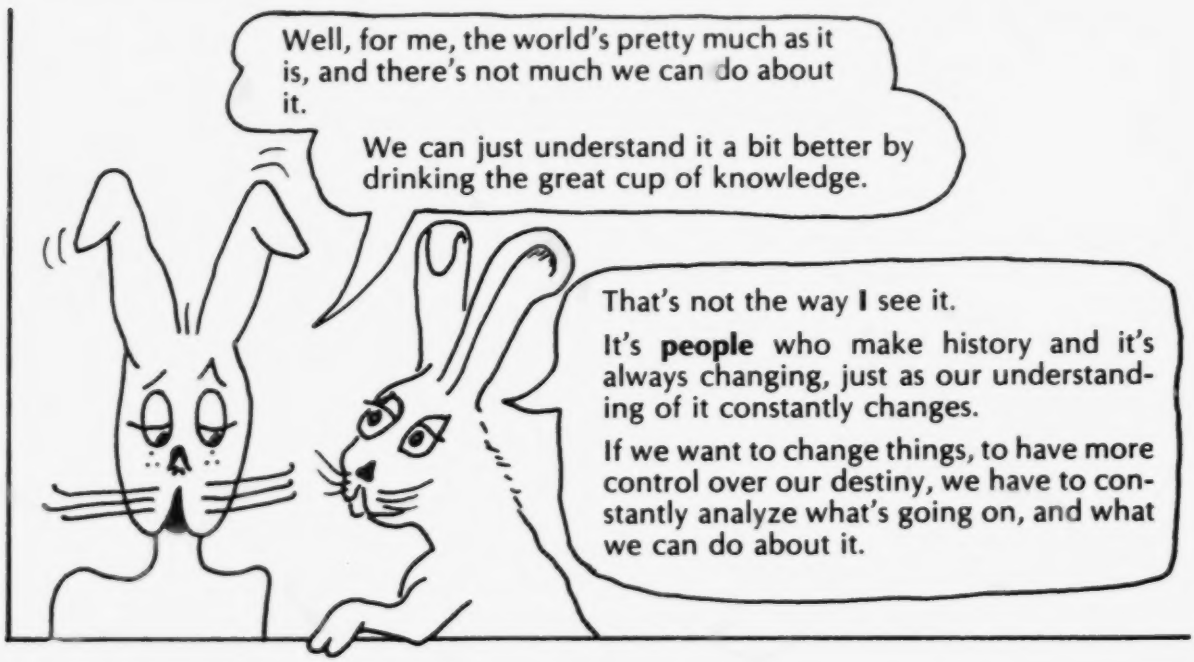
We're all in a similar quandry. We're feeling the need to look more critically at our educational work, to be more systematic in our planning of learning events, to better link our educating and organizing efforts.

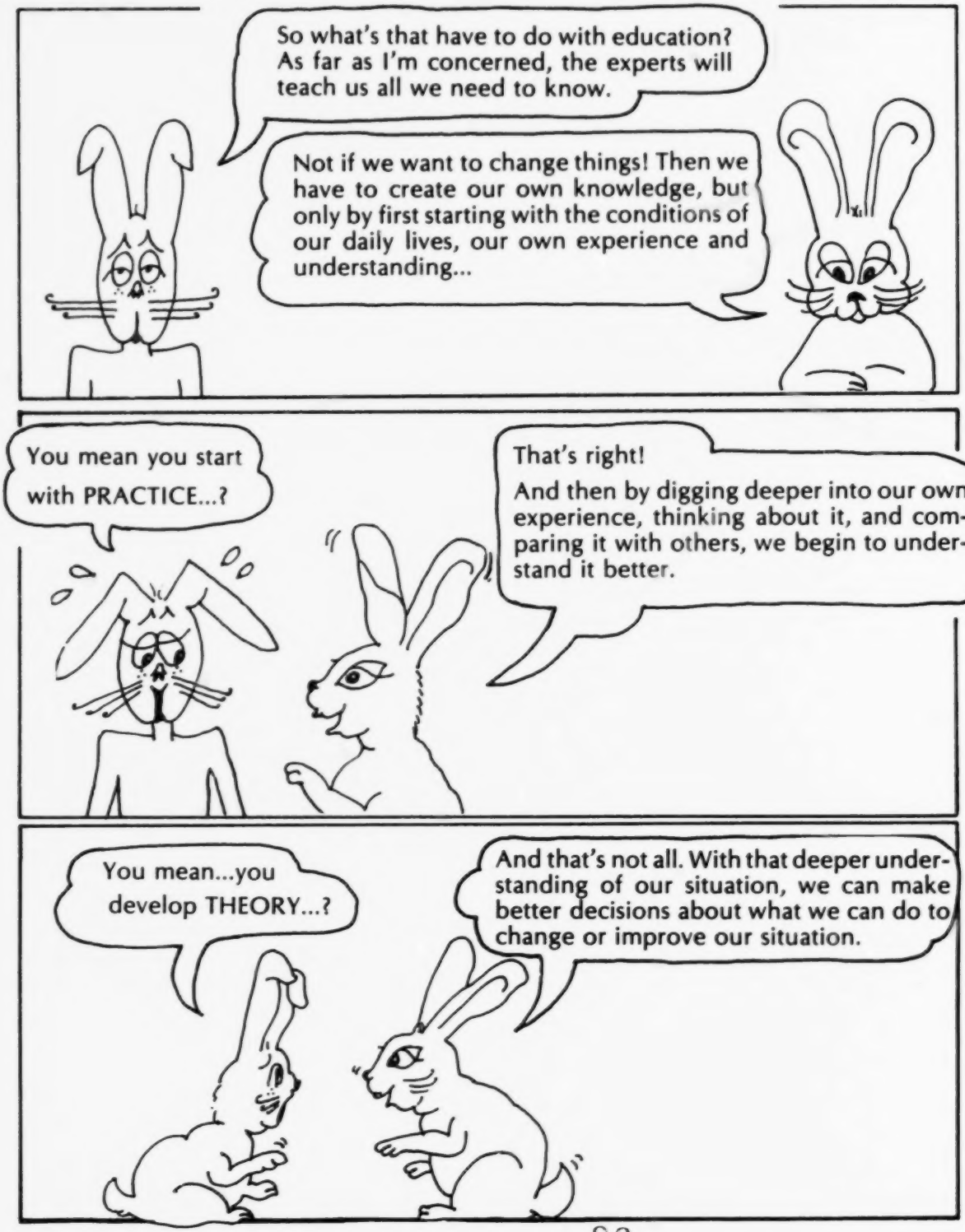
In this search, some of us have found the rich developments of *popular education* in Latin America to be clarifying and useful.

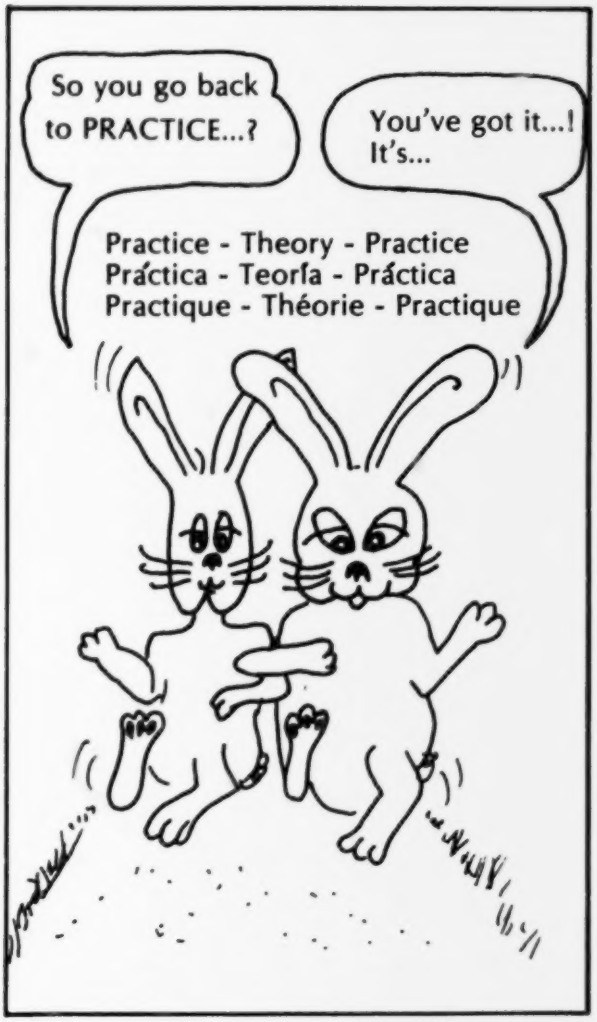
This booklet is designed, in fact, to look at some of the most useful aspects of that work. But underlying each new framework, idea, or technique that we present here is a common base: another way of thinking.

Members of the Alforja network of popular educators distinguish this way of thinking from the traditional way by calling it *dialectical*. All *popular education*, they say, applies a *dialectical methodology*.

Let's check this out with these two characters — Linearus and Dialectica.


Well, for me, the world's pretty much as it is, and there's not much we can do about it.
We can just understand it a bit better by drinking the great cup of knowledge.
That's not the way I see it.
It's people who make history and it's always changing, just as our understanding of it constantly changes.
If we want to change things, to have more control over our destiny, we have to constantly analyze what's going on, and what we can do about it.


So what's that have to do with education? As far as I'm concerned, the experts will teach us all we need to know.
Not if we want to change things! Then we have to create our own knowledge, but only by first starting with the conditions of our daily lives, our own experience and understanding...
You mean you start with PRACTICE...?
That's right!
And then by digging deeper into our own experience, thinking about it, and comparing it with others, we begin to understand it better.
You mean...you develop THEORY...?
And that's not all. With that deeper understanding of our situation, we can make better decisions about what we can do to change or improve our situation.


So you go back to PRACTICE...?
You've got it...! It's...
Practice - Theory - Practice
Práctica - Teoría - Práctica
Practique - Théorie - Practique

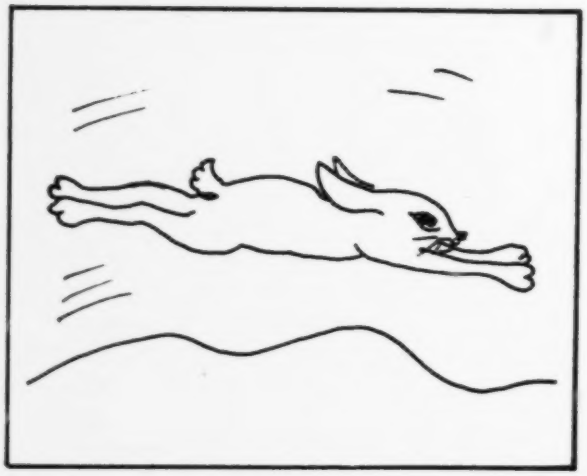
...We may have thought about these things before; if not with those exact words, perhaps we've read Paulo Freire's concept of *action-reflection-action* or been aware of basic adult education principles such as *Start with the experience of the learner, learning by doing,* etc. But we know from our practice that the process isn't all so simple as that.

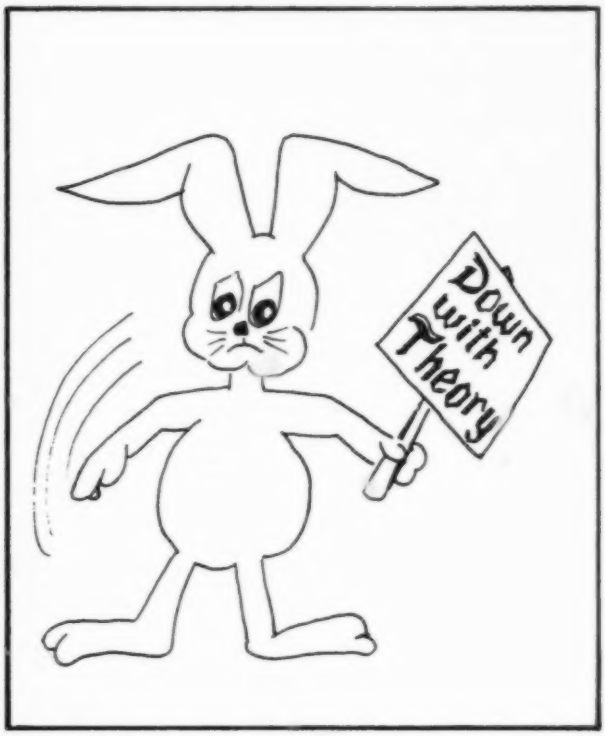
And Linearus holds fast... After all, we, like him, have been trained to think linearly, and it's hard to shift into this dialetictical approach.

Besides, old Linearus has some friends that help him resist these new ways of thinking.

There's *Activista* ... who's chummy with *Anti-Intellectus* ...Then there's *Academica* ... and *Techniqus*...

Activista's tune is *Do, do, do...;* she's just so busy getting people to do something about anything, that she never takes a moment to stop, look critically at what's being done, think about what's being learned, evaluate and change action strategies if necessary. Consequently, she can fall into sloppy action, choosing the wrong battles, or trying an approach that backfires because it wasn't thought through very carefully.





In our pragmatic society, Activista gets a lot of support from **Anti-intellectus**. He's the one who thinks that thinking is a waste of time. This may be a reaction against traditional or academic education that is often disconnected from the real world. Unfortunately, it sometimes comes out as a rejection of any kind of *theorizing* process. For theory, too, has often been presented as airy-fairy, and in the clouds, rather than intimately linked to practice, as the dialectical way of thinking proposes. Thus, Anti-Intellectus denies the value of developing a strong theoretical analysis of practice, that would make that practice more effective.

Academica provides a different kind of obstacle to dialectical thinking. She thinks that learning only happens in our heads, and when we're sitting down within four walls. She fails to see how much people learn in their daily lives and as they are actively involved in social change efforts. She also maintains the individualistic focus so prevalent in our culture, assuming that we each learn alone and accumulate knowledge for our own gain. She can't understand that learning can be a social act, and a process of collective creation of knowledge.

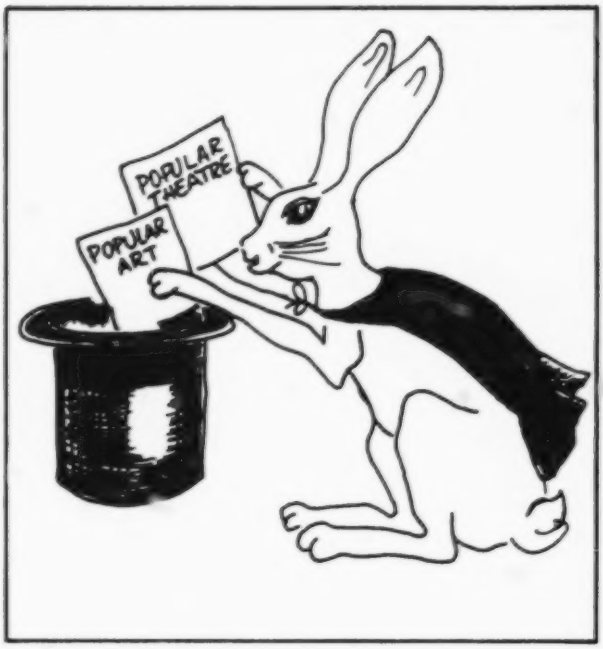
With all of these troops lining up to resist the *other way of thinking* proposed by Dialectica, we find one character thinking that he's on her side, when, in fact, he often slips into the other camp. He's **Techniqus**, who has collected a great variety of new tools and techniques. The problem is that he equates *participatory techniques* with *popular education.* And although popular education uses a lot of creative participatory techniques, the same techniques can be coopted by traditional educators who are not necessarily acting in the real interests of the people. Techniqus gets so caught up in the dynamics of these new tools, that he sometimes forgets to ask: What are we trying to achieve? Whose interests are being served?

The techniques he advocates **are** important ways for groups to start democratizing the organization and the educational process, but they must never be seen as the sole answer. A technique or a tool is just that: it can be used to oppress or to liberate (just as a pencil, or a machete, or a computer). It depends on who uses it, and for whom.

As one of our colleagues commented, the above characters are not totally discrete in our work. *Most of us have resisted, succumbed to and continue to battle all these positions in large or small ways as we try to wed theory, methodology, and techniques in the manner that Dialectica poses.*

Dialectica:

Words, words, words...
Sometimes we use them, without even knowing what we're saying, like these words technique, methodology, and theory.



Let's run through them one by one, to clarify:

The **theoretical** basis of our educational approach is its ideological conception, its view of the world, its political objective.

The educational **methodology** is our practice, how we organize learning experiences, based on our ideological view, our theoretical understanding.

Technique refers to the use of tools or activities that can be used for any purpose, i.e., applied to any methodology, used to further any ideology.

So our educational work is never neutral, and if we want our methodolgoy to be consistent with our overall organizational and political objectives, if we are using education for social change purposes, then the *dialectical* approach is a useful one for us to consider.

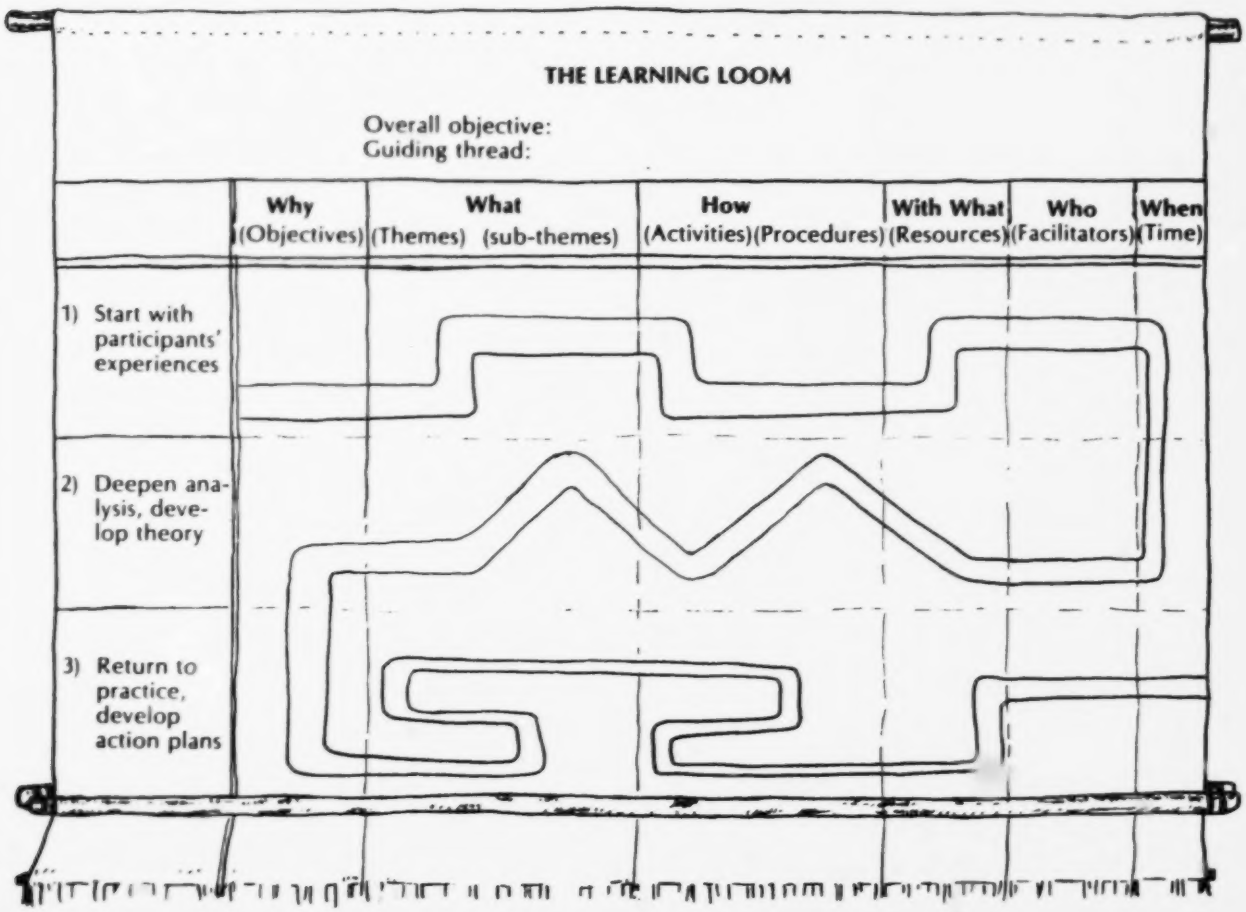
THE LEARNING LOOM

So what difference will a dialectical way of thinking make to the way we organize educational events? Alforja members have been developing over the past five years a planning tool based on the dialectical methodology of popular education. They have refined the tool as they have used it in designing over 100 workshops for popular groups.

In Central America this planning tool has been called the *cuadro sintesis*, or translated literally, *a framework that synthesizes*. It provides a framework for planning the movement from practice to theory to practice, while also synthesizing the objectives, themes, and activities of any learning event.

It will be reflected, clarified, and further developed in the following pages, as we introduce some new analytical tools created by the ALFORJA network. So, have no fear, we haven't seen the last of the methodological characters yet..!

We're calling this framework a *Learning Loom*, because we feel that a weaving metaphor is useful here. The loom is set up with a warp and a weft, a vertical and a horizontal thread. The framework also has a vertical and a horizontal dimension.



The **warp,** or the **vertical dimension,** you will note, repeats the logic of the dialectical methodology just described. It suggests that in planning any learning event, you **start with practice**, reflect on the practice to **develop theory**, and **return to practice** with greater theoretical understanding and more strategic planning for action.

The **weft** or **horizontal dimension,** resembles a good program planning model. It suggests that once you develop clear objectives (the WHY) and themes (the WHAT) for any event, you then define in more detail HOW you're going to accomplish those objectives, that is, what activities or techniques will best serve the needs and the participants, what resources you will need, WHO is responsible, etc. This provides you with a systematic way of thinking through each step of the program.

Perhaps we should clarify further just how you might use the learning loom, or framework. It, in fact, can serve as more than a planning model.

Uses of the Loom

1) To do more thoughtful designing and planning.

2) To serve as a guide (particularly for the facilitators) throughout an event, keeping us on track, allowing us to check where we're going.

3) To evaluate and assess what we've learned, how much we've assimilated, not only in terms of a specific content, but also in terms of the process, or methodology, applied.

4) To maintain records of learning events which we can refer back to and improve upon in planning future programs.

It's also important that we consider its usefulness beyond just the basic workshop. That's why we are using the term *"learning event, or opportunity"* to refer to moments or programs that offer us a chance for some systematic reflection. They may take one of various forms:

1) They could be self-contained activities, or **one-shot deals,** like a workshop or a seminar (whether it lasts for one hour or more).

2) They could be a **series** of events that form part of a coherent whole, e.g., a course made up of different class sessions, a training program running over a period of time, ongoing workshops, etc.

3) They might be an integral part of the day-to-day activity and work within our organization, but involving ongoing reflection, evaluation, and planning.

Sometimes there's a danger of considering only courses or workshops as real educational programs, when, in fact, more learning often goes on outside of the four walls, and if it is examined periodically and systematically, it can be even more useful to our daily practice. The workshop merely gives us time to focus our reflection, to separate ourselves momentarily from the constant motion of everyday activity.

Just as *Academica* gets caught up in learning for its own sake,

and *Activista* in action for its own sake...

we can see that the dichotomy between learning and action breaks down when we apply this more dialectical approach to our learning. The two cannot be divorced when we bring our practice into organized learning events like workshops and when we take our analytical tools out to the real, murky activity of our daily world.

There are two other important elements noted next to the loom. One is the **overall objective** of the event; this is a synthesis of what you want to accomplish. In weaving terms, it might be the pattern or design you want to create with participants, what you want the weaving to look like after all have joined in the process.

The other key element is the **guiding thread.** It is the central idea or axis, around which the event and all activities revolve. It is the core issue or perspective that, kept in mind, keeps you on track. It is the golden thread, if you will, that is woven throughout the fabric, which all other threads complement.

Let's look at a couple of sample workshop designs to get a concrete sense of how the learning loom can be used. Then we'll take a closer look at all these elements.

Sample Workshop 1: Introduction to Participatory Research

The first design is for a workshop with adult educators, who wanted a short introduction to participatory research. It is an example of how the learning loom as a planning model can be applied even to what may seem to be short presentations to groups. But rather than use the 1½ hours to lecture to these educators on the concept of participatory research, the two facilitators tried to base the discussion on participants' existing perceptions of the idea. The initial activity, which involved participants in groups drawing what they thought participatory research is and what it is **not,** grounded the later theoretical discussion in real examples of participatory research developed by the educators themselves. Most of the key characteristics were brought out in that activity, which the facilitators could refer to in the subsequent presentation and discussion. The small workshop concluded with a review of possible applications and action options open to the participants. Planning the flow of the workshop with the loom helped facilitators to be conscious of the participants at each stage, and to develop a mix of learning activities (from small group drawings to mini-lectures to large group synthesis).

INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

OVERALL OBJECTIVE: To understand better what is participatory research and how we can apply it in our work

GUIDING THREAD: People creating knowledge together and using it for social change

PARTICIPANTS: 16 adult educators

Design Logic	WHY Objectives	Techniques/ Activities	Procedures	WITH WHAT Resources	WHO Facilitators	WHEN Time
1) Start with experiences & perceptions of participants	To share different perceptions of what participatory research is/what it is **not**	Groups of 2-4 to draw graphic representations of what it is and is not	Divide into groups Explain task — no words collective quick (5 min.) Charts on wall Other groups decode. then group explains own.	3 flip charts, 6 markers, masking tape	Deb	20 min. 15 min.
2) Deepen analysis, theoretical understanding	To introduce basic concept and critical questions of participatory research with examples • education as integral to research process • research as integral to educational process	Mini-lecture (linked to discussion of drawings) Two case studies (Macro) Highlander - land study - Union Carbide (Micro) Toronto English-in-the-workplace program	Summarize def. & characteristics from Budd's article Questions for P.R.	Flip chart. Handout: B. Hall's paper	David Deb	20 min. 15 min.
3) Return to practice/ develop action plan	To examine concrete applications of PR in Toronto and in our own work.	Review of PRG activities — how people can get involved Summarize: where and how could you use PR?	PRG member review Each participant names one use	Flip chart	David	10 min. 1½ hours

Workshop 2: Building Alliances among Food Producers

We used the learning loom to plan three one day workshops with farmers, fishermen and food industry workers, all union members, in a program geared to strengthen the power of food producers. Each sector was to meet separately, followed by an additional day long workshop where all the unions would be together. We found that the discipline of filling in each box and making sure that it related to what had gone before helped us improve the flow of the one day program. Thinking through the vertical as well as the horizontal questions forced us to link the session to one that had gone before and to the joint session which was to follow, and kept us constantly referring to the context and experience of the participants. The loom led us to choose techniques more carefully to meet specific objectives and in some cases, to create a new tool or adapt an existing technique (as in the use of sculpturing and the *power scale*). We found that in exploring ways to introduce different kinds of alliances, the planning process helped us identify a way to draw both on the union's own history and on a Central American struggle — specifically choosing the Guatemalan Coke workers, also a food sector union. Introducing the Central American content in this way both furthered the struggle of food producers here and fostered solidarity with the struggle of the Guatemalan workers. The development of the plan also aided prior discussion with our co-facilitators from the community who were able to identify the problems in our original design. Finally, the discipline in preparing the plan in this way has facilitated sharing the design with others and continues to act as a record we can refer back to in the future.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE: To strengthen the power of food producers

DATE: February 1985

GUIDING THREAD: Building alliances across sectors

	LOGIC	OBJECTIVES	THEME	TECHNIQUE
	STARTING POINT (Group's new *reality* given previous workshop)	• Introductions • Summarize results of preliminary workshop	Summary of: • Main problems facing sector • Institutions involved in sector & responsible	Around the circle intros. & agenda presentation Flip chart summary
THEORIZING	DEEPENING GROUPS ANALYSIS • THEORIZING	• Identify power structure in food industry in province • Recognize importance of alliances with other sectors • Reflect on past experiences with alliances • Recognize importance of international alliances and solidarity	• Their (participants') history of organized response • Group decides who has most power/who has least • Source of their own power • Identify allies/ enemies • Identify what can be gained from and what can be offered to alliances with other producers and workers	SCULPTURING *POWER SCALE* • Individual reflection • Small group discussion and summary (1)
			• Look at the kinds of alliances & the reasons for them • What are factors contributing to success or failure of alliances	Energizer (2) CASE STUDY A) One from the Province - their choice B) Example of the Guatemalan Coke workers
RETURN TO PRACTICE	BACK TO REALITY	• Build stronger provincial alliances with other food related unions	• Prepare presentation for following workshop with other sectors • Summarize the day • Get participant input for objectives for upcoming joint workshop	Small group discussion filling in prepared forms summarizing main points Full group discussion and noting up on flip chart
	ACTION	• Evaluation	• Reflect on process (1) • Get feedback from participants on workshop	Facilitator summary Participants write down comments individually and then share collectively (6)

PARTICIPANTS: Unions of farmers, fishermen and food industry workers
LENGTH OF WORKSHOP: Three one-day sessions — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (leading up to joint one day sessions)

PROCEDURE	MATERIALS	WHO RESP.	TIME
Each person introduces themselves (mainly for facilitator's benefit as they already know each other) and go over agenda for the day. Flip chart summary is gone over briefly (will be referred to again later)	• Prepare agenda on flip chart • Prepare summary of earlier workshop on flip chart	Local facilitator 1 of 2 (Both had been at previous workshop) M. & M.	20 min.
Explain rules of sculpturing: — identify main institutional *actors* in food system in province (from previous workshop) and write on pieces of paper and pass out to group. Ask first person to stick paper on chest and strike a pose to indicate something of relation to other *actors*. Build complete picture of how all actors relate to each other using props (chairs, etc.) if necessary. Debriefing: — main actors on same pieces of paper are stuck on a 1—10 *power scale* then cover in a discussion: A) Where *our* power comes B) What can be done to increase that power C) Who are natural & potential allies/opposition forces (circle using two different colours).	• Put one main actor on each piece of paper (do in advance) • Prepare a *Power scale* chart on flip chart • Masking tape • Coloured markers	Outside facilitators Rick - sculpturing Bev - debrief	45 min.
Reflect individually and then share in groups of 3 to 4 people. Each group is asked to draw up a list of what they could offer/gain from alliances with the other two sectors. Summarize	• Pencils • Paper	Bev	60 min.
LUNCH			60 min.
A) Group develops history of a local experience involving an alliance. Then the facilitator asks: What was the most important thing about that experience? Who initiated the alliance? Who did it involve? What can we learn from that experience? B) Read aloud together prepared case study of Coke workers in Guatemala. Then ask same questions as per 1st case study. Summary of common factors in both case studies (3).	• Flip chart • Marker Pen • Prepare Coke workers case study ahead of time • Flip chart	M. & M. Rick	45 min. 30 min.
Introduce idea of preparing messages directed at the other unions. Introduce task and hand out papers which have the following on them: - Two things we can offer to an alliance - Two things we could use from an alliance - A word of encouragement Reflect on this first as individuals (4) and then discuss and fill out in small groups. Summarize small group work/messages and then decide how and who to present messages to the other sectors (facilitators took points from this discussion and finished the sentences to make readable messages). Put participant objectives for next session up on flip chart.	• Forms prepared for messages • Flip chart	M. Bev	60 min.
Facilitator reviews referring to sheets of chart paper and to agenda. Ask people to write down 2 things they liked best, two things that could have been improved and what they learned. Share comments with full group and note on flip chart. Collect papers.	• Paper • Pencils • Flip chart	Rick	15 min.

The vertical dimension - in greater depth

Let's think through more carefully and concretely what is meant by the movement from practice to theory to practice. How do we actually develop that flow in the planning of a learning event?

1) Starting with practice

This involves first knowing who the participants are and/or assessing their situation and needs. These are the kinds of questions we might ask:

- What is their situation? What are the *objective conditions* within which they live and work?
- What is their work or *practice*? What have been their efforts to try to change their situation or conditions?
- What is their understanding of their situation and of their practice? What *perspectives/analyses* do they bring with them?

A learning event might start, then, with a recognition of any one of the three aspects above. It might begin with an activity, for example, that clarifies the perspectives participants have on a given issue. Or it might allow them to describe in different ways their community or workplace, or their work or practice. It might also move through activities that help participants to look critically at all of these elements.

2) Deepening the analysis, or developing theory

There's a tendency to conceive of theorizing as something like *ascending* into the clouds. But theory that is really drawn out of peoples' deeper understanding of their lives must rather be a process of *descending* into the concrete. We start with the real experiences revealed in the first stages *(Starting with practice)* and we analyze and synthesize our perceptions of them.

Theorizing involves a slow process of distancing ourselves from the immediate raw experiences and perceptions so that we can interpret them more objectively. We use the tools of scientific analysis to help us understand our situation in both historical and material terms.

This process of theorization is perhaps clarified with the exploration and example given below:

PERCEPTION

We start with our perceptions of raw experience, which may initally seem diverse, scattered, unorganized.

REFLECTION

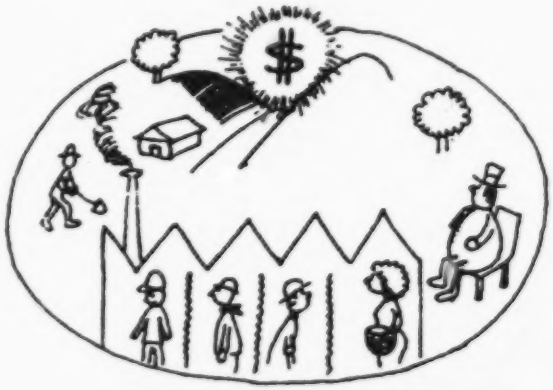
As we reflect on them, we begin to see how things go together, and how they can be taken apart.

CONCEP-TUALIZATION

Once we are clearer about the elements, we begin to see their relationship to each other, developing concepts to explain that.

SYNTHESIS and INTER-PRETATION

This leads us to an understanding that embeds our experience within a particular material context and historical process: a scientific analysis based on objective conditions.



For example, let's see if we can understand this theorization process as it might unfold with members of an injured workers' union:

The workers get together to talk about their various experiences as workers and how they became injured.

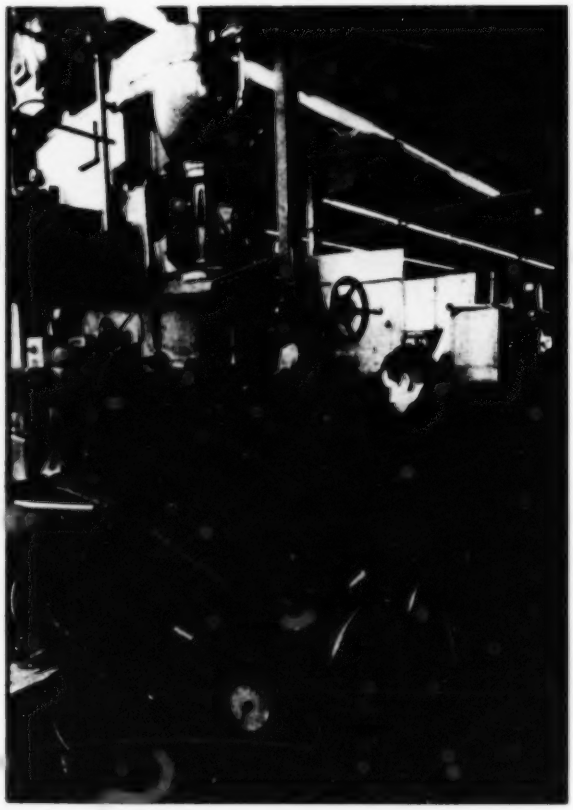
PERCEPTION

"We weren't told that the chemicals we dip the metal rings in were toxic and could burn your skin..."

"I was working overtime and got so dizzy from standing up for 10 hours that my hand slipped under the press..."

"After 8 years in front of a video display terminal, I began to develop cataracts in my eyes..."

"I fell off a rickety scaffolding and broke my back..."



In thinking about what each other said, they realize there are certain common themes in their stories.

REFLECTION

The **working conditions** *in our workplaces are not always safe or up to standard.*

*"***Production practices** *such as piece work, overtime, lack of breaks, etc. contribute to stress and increase the danger of accidents."*

"Workers are **not always informed** *about the equipment and substances they work with, but they have a right to know..."*

In examining the common themes in greater depth, the injured workers begin to see how the issues are interrelated: each is determined by the owners and managers of the production process, not the workers.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

"Owners want to save money in capital costs..."

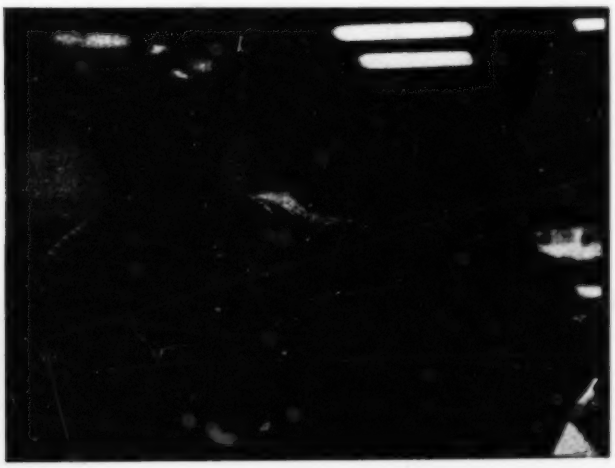
"And save time (= money) in tight production schedules..."

"Because their preoccupation is often profits over people."

The workers can thus see their role more clearly within the production process and the broader economic system. The same objective conditions that contributed to their injury keep them in a particular social class.

SYNTHESIS and INTERPRETATION

"Along with money, time, and equipment, we are one more element in a production process that benefits the owners but not the workers. Once we are injured and can no longer work, we are easily replaced by the many unemployed workers in the reserve work force."



So we can see that the theorizing process involves moving from the more subjective descriptions of experience that has not been reflected upon, to a more objective understanding of those experiences that grounds them in the broader historical and material process. In designing a learning event to slowly develop theory out of practice, we may use a variety of activities at different steps of the way. With the above example, we might start out with workers telling their stories about how they got injured. The common themes might be identified through an activity of making placards or posters headlining the major issues emerging from the stories. For the conceptualization stage, theoretical readings or a film might feed into an analysis of how the issues are interrelated.

Synthesis and scientific interpretation would involve a summary session: writing a collective text or drawing symbolically the theoretical understanding reached.

3) Returning to practice, or developing an action plan

We need to be able to apply the new analytical tools we've developed in reflecting on and theorizing about our own experience. There are really two stages to this process:

- The first step takes place within the learning event, when we take time to:
  - develop strategies for action on the issue
  - prepare plans for the next steps to be taken outside the event
  - produce materials that can be used in the work context or in other learning events
- The next step is perhaps the most difficult. It involves carrying out the new strategies we've developed, implementing the plans. It might take some of these forms:
  - taking a specific action in the community or workplace
  - using skills or tools learned in confronting daily problems
  - applying a popular education methodology to the ongoing process of building a popular movement (by linking reflection to organization)

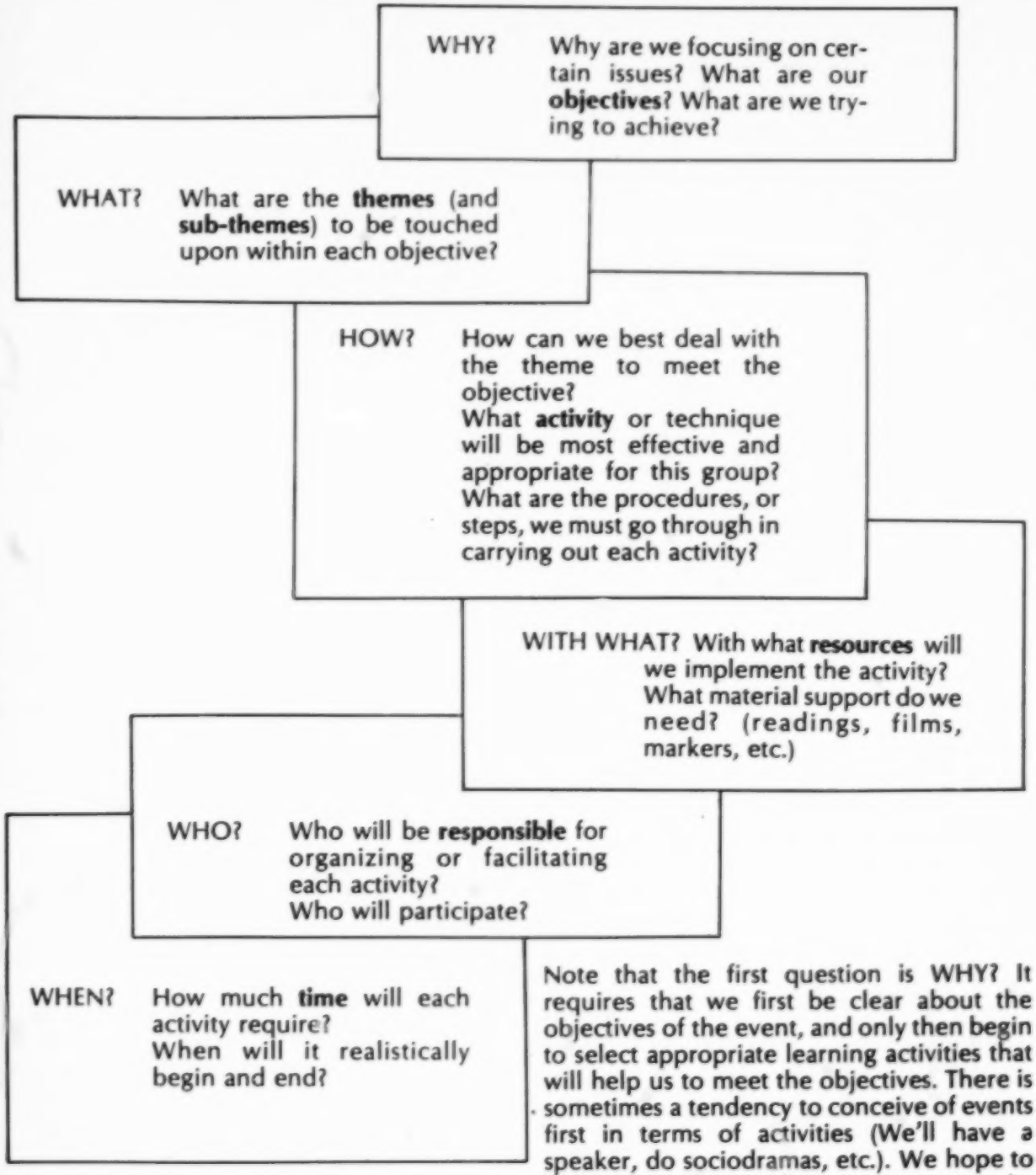
The horizontal dimension in greater depth

This horizontal dimension of the *learning loom* provides us with a guideline for thinking through the unfolding and logistical organization of each part of the learning event. This planning process should always involve members of the group or representatives of the participants for whom the event is being planned.

The horizontal dimension of the loom helps us ask 6 key questions in the planning process:

We should recall that before we develop the specific objectives and corresponding activities, we need to clarify the *overall objective* of the event and the *guiding thread*, the idea or goal that holds it all together. These will be in the front of our minds as we work through the horizontal dimension. So our model might look like this:

Overall objective: Guiding thread:					
Why (Objectives)	**What** (Themes)(Sub-themes)	**How** Activity)(Procedure)	**With What** (Resources)	**Who** (Responsible)	**When** (Time)


WHY? Why are we focusing on certain issues? What are our **objectives**? What are we trying to achieve?
WHAT? What are the **themes** (and **sub-themes**) to be touched upon within each objective?
HOW? How can we best deal with the theme to meet the objective?
What **activity** or technique will be most effective and appropriate for this group?
What are the procedures, or steps, we must go through in carrying out each activity?
WITH WHAT? With what **resources** will we implement the activity?
What material support do we need? (readings, films, markers, etc.)
WHO? Who will be **responsible** for organizing or facilitating each activity?
Who will participate?
WHEN? How much **time** will each activity require?
When will it realistically begin and end?

Note that the first question is WHY? It requires that we first be clear about the objectives of the event, and only then begin to select appropriate learning activities that will help us to meet the objectives. There is sometimes a tendency to conceive of events first in terms of activities (We'll have a speaker, do sociodramas, etc.). We hope to break that more *technique* orientation by starting with the *Why?* and not the *How?*

Summarizing the planning process

So, putting together the vertical and horizontal dimension of the loom, with our deeper understanding of each now, we might summarize the planning process in three stages:

1) Answer clearly the following questions:

   - Who are the participants?
   - What is the overall objective?
   - What is the central thread, the key point that provides a focus for the entire event?

2) Work through the vertical dimension first:

   - Propose the specific objectives and themes.
   - Break the themes into sub-themes (to develop a clearer, more concrete focus).
   - Organize the objectives to move from practice to theory to practice.

3) Then work on the horizontal dimension:

   - Select the most appropriate learning activities (for the participants and for the proposed objectives).
   - Outline carefully the procedures to follow in implementing each activity.
   - Note all the resources you will need.
   - Assign responsibilities for each task.
   - Make a realistic time estimate of the time needed for each activity and a time line for the entire event.

Some limits of this tool

First of all, we should note that in Central America, where the *learning loom* was first developed, there are as many variations on it as there are countries where it is being used. That is to say, you will probably adapt and recreate the loom idea to fit your own purposes. You may use different terms, fewer or more categories, whatever makes the planning process easier for you.

Secondly, the dynamic flow from practice to theory to practice will vary greatly depending on the time available, the setting, the level of the participants, the overall objectives. In longer or serial events (like a course with several sessions), you will move from practice to theory and back again many times. You will probably do so even within single learning activities. (There are dialectical processes within dialectical processes!) Don't worry about a rigid application of what we've suggested here; the important thing is to understand the dynamics of a dialectical methodology and how it can be used to move the learning process along.

Finally, the key determinant in how you use this tool will always be your participants: why they're involved, what they want/need to focus on, what kinds of learning is most effective for them. Familiarity, sensitivity, asking the right questions, being ready to shift gears if necessary — all help.

Implications for popular educators

The use of this approach and planning tool suggests several *tips* for those educators who want to work in this way:

- Know the sector you're working with, ideally through an ongoing working relationship.
- Have some theoretical understanding and knowledge of the theme (though your special role is concerned with the process).
- Clarify the terms you are using with the participants so there is a common understanding and comfort with the language.
- Be flexible: from the design process to the actual implementation of the event, you will have to constantly adapt as needs become clearer or priorities shift.

On the following page, we've included a blank learning loom which you can photocopy and adapt for your own use.

WORKSHOP PLANNING MODEL

Overall objective:

Guiding thread: **Participants:**

LOGIC	WHY Objectives	WHAT Themes Sub-Themes	HOW Activities Procedures	WITH WHAT Resources	WHEN Time
1) Start with experiences and perceptions of participants					
2) Deepen analysis, develop new skills, tools					
3) Develop plans for action					

NAMING THE POLITICAL MOMENT

Another concept that we found useful among the analytical tools of the Alforja popular educators is what they call a *conjunctural analysis.* Does it sound more like an eye examination? Well, although it takes a *critical* eye to carry it out, it has nothing to do with optometry. We might call this process *analyzing the political moment.* For Latin Americans, the *conjuncture* refers to all the social, political, and economic forces that are in play at a particular moment in time. It's the interrelationship of these forces that's more important than the elements themselves. When we speak of the political moment, we're referring to developments in the economic, political, and ideological sphere, and how a crisis in one (e.g., inflation) will affect the others (political party relationships, educational opportunities, etc.). We're implying that we need to look at things in terms of all of those elements, and from the perspectives of different popular social sectors. This involves picking apart (analyzing) and putting together (synthesizing).

Why is it important to do this kind of analysis in our work as popular educators?

First of all, if we look at things with a *dialectical way of thinking,* then we understand that the social situation is constantly changing. And that, therefore, our understanding of it also has to change. We may have analyzed and understood what's going on in our organization, for example, at one moment in time, but for new developments (e.g., funding cutbacks, leadership changes, new social crises in our constituency), we will need to do a new analysis.

Secondly, if we are trying to organize educational events for any group of people, we've agreed that we need to understand the objective conditions of their lives, what their major concerns and educational needs are. We can't design learning programs for them without first analyzing the broader context within which they live and work.

Thirdly, we often incorporate an analysis of the situation into workshops of learning events as part of the movement from a description of peoples' experiences to a more critical reflection and understanding of them, that is, from practice to theory.

Also, if we are serious about helping people to plan for more effective action within a learning event, we have to understand the social context and historical moment within which they'll be acting, to assess their impact, and choose an appropriate strategy.

Finally, one of the ongoing skills people need to develop within learning events but use regularly in their daily work is precisely this ongoing analysis, or this ability to analyze the political moment.

Are you convinced . . .?
Well, then, ... let's consider some tools that can help us in the process.

Monthly Meetings

This practice has been institutionalized by a popular education centre in Panama called CEASPA (Panamanian Centre for Social Research and Action), that works closely with CCS (the Social Leadership Training Centre). CEASPA has a documentation centre called CIDOC, that receives and catalogues over 50 Latin American newspapers and magazines each month. The documentation centre provides the CEASPA team with newsclippings from five newspapers; they are filed into 10-15 categories reflecting the economic, political, and ideological developments in Panama, the region, and the world (e.g., the U.S. economy, multinationals, Panama's economy, political parties labour, native people, education, culture, etc.) But these clippings aren't meant to only fill the archives.

CEASPA has developed over the years working relationships with a variety of groups in the popular sector, from major labour coalitions to progressive church groups to native peoples' organizations. Once a month over 20 representatives of these groups come together for an all-day meeting to analyze the political moment, or in their terms, to do a conjunctural analysis. The newsclippings that have been neatly filed into categories are distributed among the representatives, according to their special interest areas, prior to the meeting. Thus, that informtion gets processed and fed into the overall analysis done by the whole group.

The day is spent then with members of the various sectors providing a brief analysis of developments in their field, with input and discussion from others. Finally, there is an attempt to put it all together, asking: What are the major forces at work now? What are the key issues that require further study? How do these developments affect our ongoing work in each sector? What are the strategic activities we need to give priority to, within each organization? What kinds of joint actions would be useful/possible?

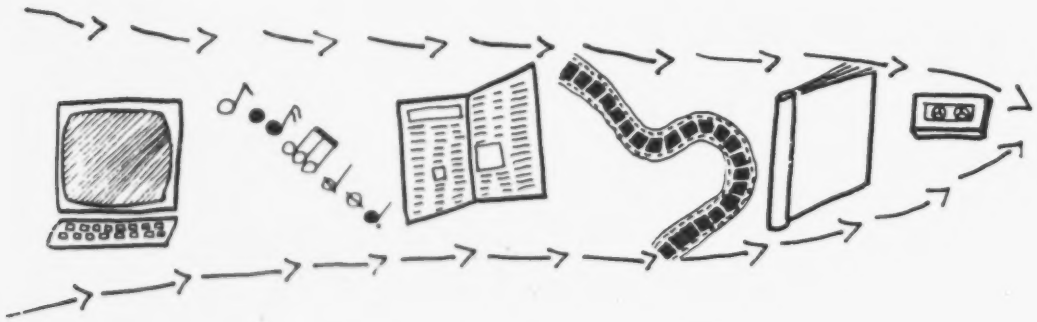
These sessions do not always result in direct and coordinated action. But they do provide an opportunity for reflection for each of the sectors involved and around a variety of issues. And they give all participants an overview, a more global picture, that they wouldn't get in internal discussions. Finally, they feed into each group's thinking about what are the most important tasks they should be undertaking. They become a backdrop for the development of more strategic work plans.

And there is another, perhaps more concrete, outcome of the monthly sessions. Because CEASPA and CCS are involved in publishing the major social news journal in Panama, **Dialogo Social**, they have a ready-made outlet for their analyses. A summary of each session of conjunctural analysis appears in each month's edition of the magazine. In that way, the collective is compelled to summarize and communicate the results of their discussions. And more importantly, a much broader constituency benefits from the monthly activity. Let's just review this example of *conjunctural analysis* in practice.

It combines a variety of activities and integrates them in a way that might give us some ideas:

1) It makes use of DOCUMENTATION, which is a service that many groups in Canada have, or have access to. Yet we don't often organize systematically the information, distribute it strategically, and feed it immediately into our discussions of the current situation. Historically, we have a wonderful example of this kind of work in the News Synthesis Project, which, until 1978, synthesized the news from major Canadian newspapers and in clear social categories published a monthly collection of their findings.

IDEA: How can we systematically review, clip, and categorize the information we receive? How can we best share it with other groups?



2) It offers SYSTEMATIC AND STRATEGIC DISSEMINATION of newsclippings to key sectors. Thus, an education and research organization provides a useful service to popular organizations that otherwise might not have access to such a wide variety of documents. It educates them, but in terms of their own interests.

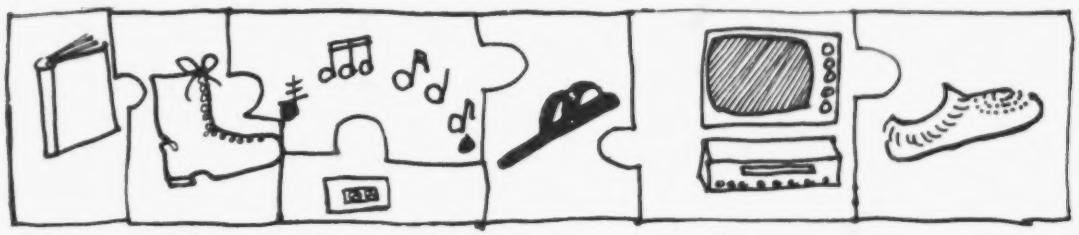
IDEA: Who can make use of the documents we receive? How can they be distributed and used while they're fresh?

3) It is an INTER—SECTORAL EFFORT, deliberately bringing people together who represent different popular groups and social interests, even though they may all be working toward a similar social vision. Each can provide specific information relative to their sector, and each can provide the perspective of their interest group on the developments and issues being discussed.

IDEA: How can we involve various sectors in our efforts to analyze what's going on? Or, how can we assure that the perspectives of these groups are reflected in our analyses?

The same can be asked of the diversity of single-issue groups in Canada:

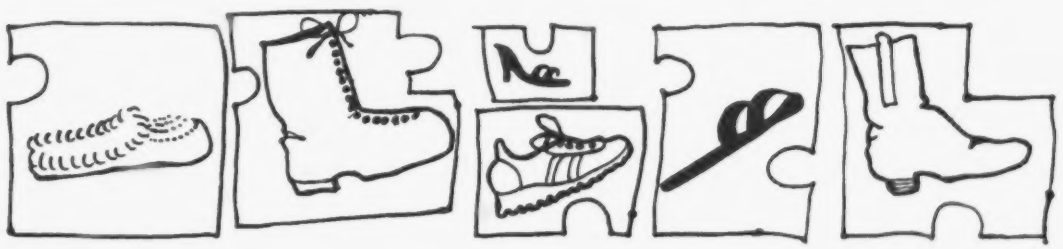
How can we bring together groups that are working on different issues but with similar goals and the same constituency? (For example, how can we involve people from the peace movement, from solidarity groups, and from environmental organizations to analyze together the current Canadian policy around the testing of nuclear arms?)



4) The process used in the monthly meetings organized by CEASPA is one of COLLECTIVE ANALYSIS. Each participant from each different sector represented brings information and analysis that's fed into the caldron. Then the group as a whole wrestles with putting the pieces together. It is thus not in the hands or mind of one individual to offer the overview, it becomes a collective construction.

IDEA: How can we get all members of our group involved in contributing to an analysis of the current situation?

How can we best use the skills and perspectives of each participant to make the overall picture more comprehensive, rich, insightful?



5) The sessions of collective analysis help participants develop a sense of priorities for STRATEGIC ACTION PLANNING. Each month, they are asked to reassess what they're doing in light of the current state of affairs. They often get insight into new directions that should be taken in their work, growing out of the analysis.

IDEA: How can we carry out regular social analyses that help us re-evaluate and re-direct our work priorities?

How can we take regular time to look carefully at how our work is serving crucial issues of the time?

Are we willing to shift direction if our analyses indicates a need to do so?

6) Finally, the CEASPA-coordinated process of conjunctural analysis feeds into a SUMMARY ARTICLE that has immediate use in a social-oriented MAGAZINE. This keeps the final analysis concise and clear, and assures that it is useful to a large number of people.

IDEA: How can we best summarize the analyses of the current social situation once we've done them?

What kinds of publications do we have access to that could print periodic summaries of our analyses (selectively)?

What is the best way to disseminate the results of our freshest collective thinking on these issues?

Perhaps most simply, and most importantly, what we can draw from the Panama experience is:

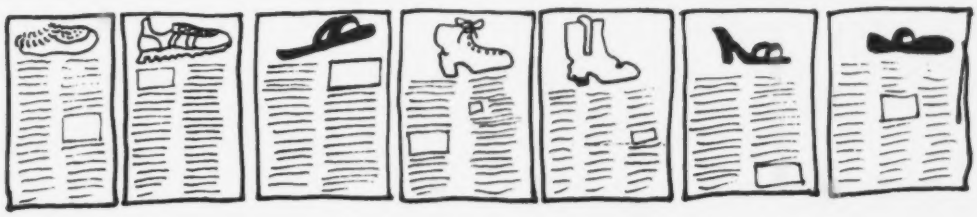
THEY DID IT! Once a month, they got together to talk systematically about what was going on.

Over a period of time, that kind of regular activity sharpens analytical skills, develops solid inter-sectoral relationships, and builds a deeper social analysis that is bound to show in the more thoughtful action planning of organizations.

IDEA: How can we set aside some time to think about current developments: economic, political, ideological?

What difference would it make in our work? in our educational practice?

Talk with at least one other person in your group about these ideas, or raise them at a meeting. Jot your ideas down here..

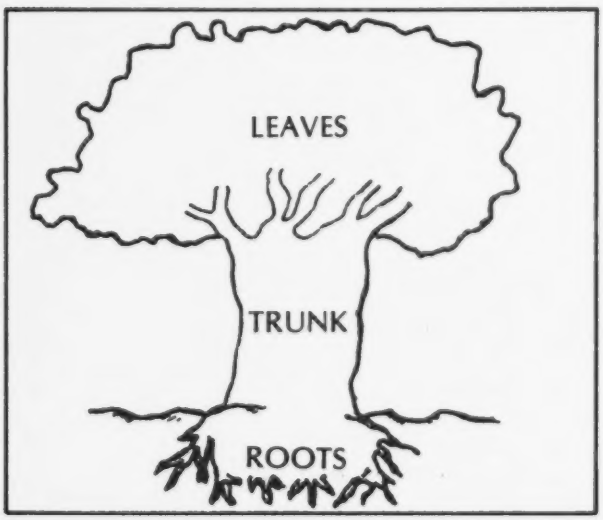


The "Social Tree"

This tool for doing social analysis or conjunctural analysis was developed during one of the Alforja annual workshops. It all started one day when a group of educators were sitting around the very tree that appears in the photograph on this page. It occurred to them that something so concrete, so natural, could serve as a metaphor to explain the nature of social relations. The idea of the "social tree" was born.

(The use of metaphors opens up tremendous creativity in a group. Metaphors tap not only our rational but also our emotional side; they make us more playful while also keeping us grounded. It is sometimes easier to express abstract concepts through metaphors of everyday objects or experiences. And the process of exploring an idea metaphorically may give us new insights into the interrelations of all living things.)

Thus, the tree is just one example of the use of metaphor for social analysis. But even this tool can be adapted to visualize social structures at many levels: a nation-state, a province or city, an institution or organization.



Why the tree? Let's think about the three major parts of a tree. The roots provide the base, feed the growth of the trunk and branches, ground the tree in a particular environment. The economic system fulfills a similar function in any social structure. While often hidden, it determines, to a large extent, the shape of the society.

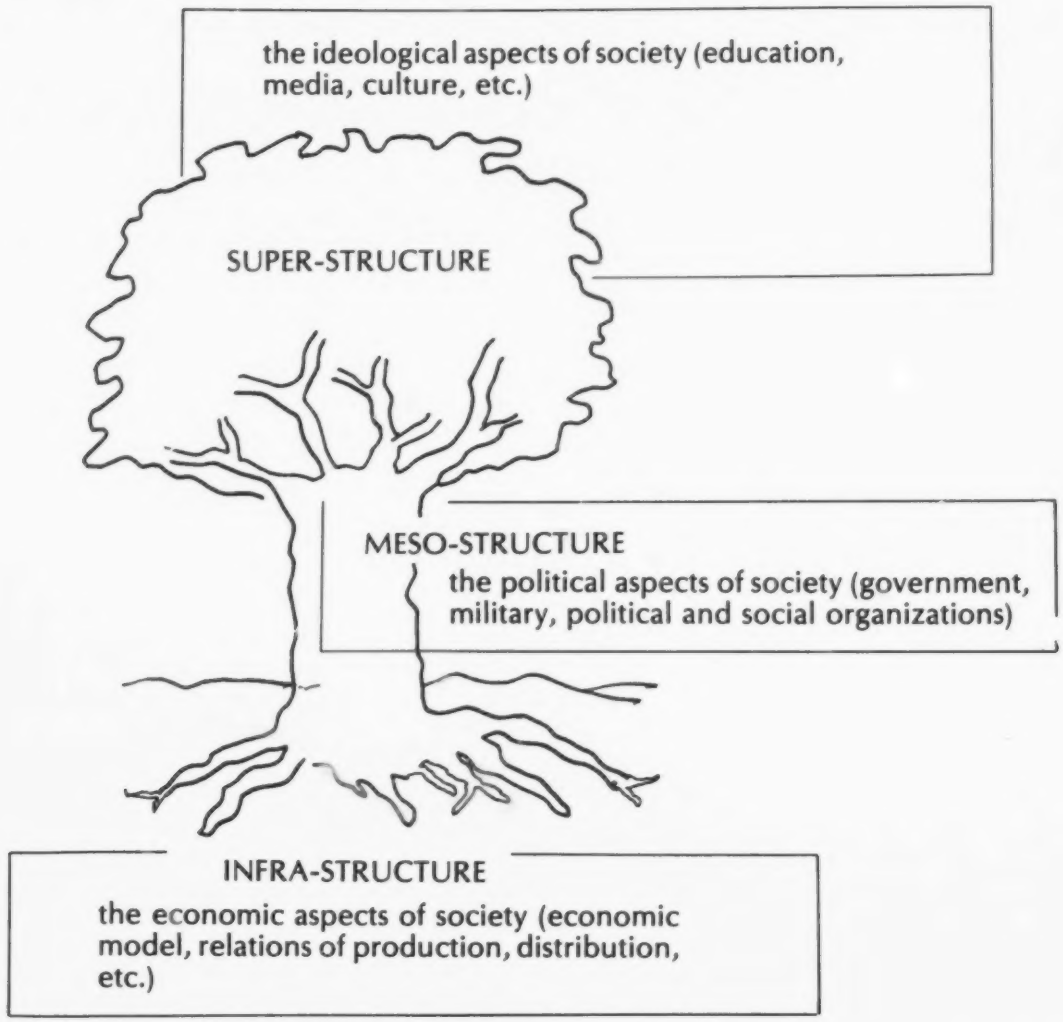
The trunk and branches give a basic structure to the tree, growing out of the roots, giving birth to the foliage. The political structure of a society (or organization), likewise, reflects how it is organized and how power is distributed.

Finally, the leaves on the tree are outward manifestations of the roots, trunk and branches. Just as the forms of ideology in any society reflect and reinforce its political and economic system.

The diagram of the *social tree* developed by Central American popular educators is below. On the adjacent page, you'll find a question guide that can be used to analyze in greater detail the economic, political, and ideological aspects of any social structure (nation, community, organization, etc.) You

will note that these questions refer primarily to a national social system. The guide is an adaptation of a list developed by the Alforja members, who have a common practice of analyzing political and economic developments at the national level. Of course, the countries of Central America are much smaller geographically than Canada, but we might ask ourselves: How often do we undertake a *national* structural or conjunctural analysis? And what questions would we add (or subtract) from this list?

The social tree, however, can be used for analyzing other levels of social structure as well. Depending on what level of society you decide to focus upon, you may want to vary the questions. Read them through first and make the appropriate adaptations.


the ideological aspects of society (education, media, culture, etc.)
SUPER-STRUCTURE
MESO-STRUCTURE
the political aspects of society (government, military, political and social organizations)
INFRA-STRUCTURE
the economic aspects of society (economic model, relations of production, distribution, etc.)

QUESTION GUIDE FOR SOCIAL TREE ANALYSIS

ROOTS or INFRASTRUCTURE
(economic aspects of society)

1) How is property distributed (the means of production: land, industry, financial institutions)?
2) What social classes can be identified?
3) What are the natural (material and human) resources? How are they used?
4) What are the major exports? Imports?
5) What kind of economic relations are there with other countries?
6) What are the funding sources for ongoing social programs? Who pays? Who benefits?

TRUNK or MESO—STRUCTURE
(political aspects of society)

1) What government bodies exist? What are their functions?
2) What kinds of laws are there? Who makes the laws? How are they made?
3) What kind of military structure is there? What is its role?
4) What are the various social organizations: political parties, religious institutions, business associations, labour unions, community groups? Who are their constituencies? What role do they play in society?

LEAVES or SUPER-STRUCTURE
(ideological aspects of society)

1) How is the educational system organized? Who benefits from education? What is the major content of education?
2) Who controls the media? What are the major messages communicated?
3) What forms of cultural and artistic expression exist? How are they organized/encouraged?
4) What are the basic philosophical ideals of the society?
5) What are the major beliefs and values?
6) What can be identified as the vices of the society?
7) How are family relationships characterized? (relations between husband and wife, male and female roles, relations between parents and children)
8)

To summarize, the social tree can be used for several purposes:

- to analyze the social structure: its economic base, political forms, and ideological apparatus;
- to analyze different levels of structure: nation, city, organization, program, etc.
- to better understand the interrelationship of these elements (economic, political, and ideological);
- to compare situations over time, understanding better the dialectical process of social change;
- to identify key social problems at one particular moment in time and develop strategies for confronting them.

Trying It Out

Let's consider how you might use this tool within a learning event, or workshop:

INTRODUCE TOOL

Introduce the concept of the *social tree* to the group. You might first talk about the various associations people have with the parts of a tree and what aspects of the social structure they might represent.

CLARIFY OBJECTIVES

Clarify your objectives in using the tool. That is, is it to analyze a nation-state or an organization? To understand better how it functions or to identify problem areas? To analyze the relationship of forces or to use it for making strategic action plans?

DEVELOP QUESTIONS

Decide what will be the most appropriate questions to ask. You may want to develop your own. (On the following pages, there is an example of an adaptation of the tool made to analyze adult education programs).

DISCUSS IN GROUPS

Divide the participants into small groups and allow 1-2 hours for a thorough discussion of the elements.

REPORT BACK

Finally, you will want to report back the analyses made in the small groups, using the *social tree* as a guide.

The reporting back can be done using various techniques:

- each group can write the key elements from their discussion on index cards, pasting these cards on a large common drawing of the social tree
- a summary of the group discussion can be made in the form of a drawing, with the answers sketched in graphic or symbolic form, which can be explained as they are presented

COMPARE ANALYSES

Compare the elements discussd in the various groups. Is there a concensus about what the basics are? Where there is disagreement, what is it due to? Are there different social class perspectives represented in your group? In your analyses?

IDENTIFY INTER—RELATIONSHIPS

Once the small group analyses have been synthesized in the large group, the discussion should move to yet another level: clarifying the interrelationships between the various elements.

This means that the analysis should examine how the kind of economic system, for example, determines the kind of educational system that exists, and how the values taught through education reinforce that particular economic model. This kind of relationship between the various aspects of society is not linear, but rather dialectical.

Select any element that has been mentioned as an economic, political, or ideological aspect of society and see how it is reflected in the other two levels of social structure. What is the dynamic relationship between these aspects?

DEVELOP STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

This discussion is particularly important if you're talking about trying to change some aspect of society. For example, if you want to change the values or norms governing male and female relationships, you have to consider discrimination in the economic realm and the issue of equal pay for work of equal value, which would require a political change, through legislative measures.

The tool thus helps us see the whole of society even though we may be focusing on only one part. We need to understand the broader economic, political, and ideological context in order to develop realistic strategies for change in any one area.

On these two pages, we offer examples of adaptations that have been made of the *social tree* analytical tool. The first is a list of questions developed by organizers of adult education programs to analyze and compare their different work contexts.

Analysis of Adult Education Programs

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

- Where does the funding come from?
- How does the funding shape the program?
- How has funding changed over time?
- How do the constituents make a living?
- Who benefits economically from the program? In what ways?
- How are the educational objectives related to economic goals (e.g., employment, labour needs)?

POLITICAL ASPECTS

- Who is the constituency served by the program?
- What social classes are represented?
- Who initiated the program?
- How are decisions made? Who makes them?
- What other organizations/institutions is the program linked to?
- Who are potential allies/adversaries?
- What role does the state play?

IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS

- What educational principles are espoused by the program?
- What methods are applied?
- What is the educational content? Who determines it?
- What cultural forms are used?
- How are participants empowered or disempowered?
- Who understands how the program functions?
- What ideological perspective(s) is(are) underlying the program?

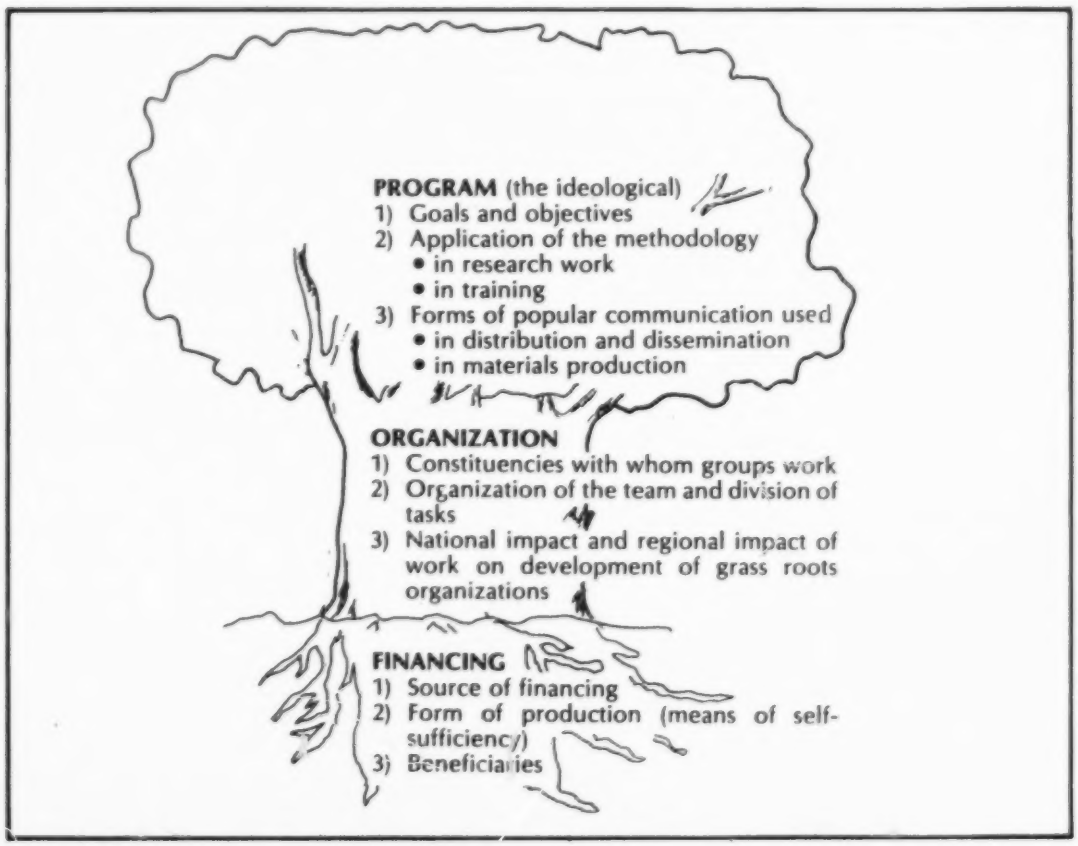
Program Evaluation Tool

In the adaptation below, the social tree was used as an evaluation tool in group discussion with the staff of popular education centres. Even the three major categories were renamed in language that is a bit more common. The questions, or topic discussed, in this case were determined by the overall objective of the evaluation, which was concerned with the social impact of the work of those centres.

This tool was used in group interviews with the staff of five centres. In one of those the staff responded to the three areas of inquiry by gathering materials that reflected their work: documents, productions, brochures, budgets, cartoons, etc. They made an enormous collage by pasting these artifacts on to a large drawing of a tree. This collective production then became a starting point for a deeper discussion around the issues outlined in the evaluation guide under the general areas of program, organization, and financing. It was an active and fun way to use the tree, and grounded the analysis in concrete elements of the work.

Another Canadian group used the social tree to do an analysis of media articles and ads reflecting consumer education around nutrition and its relationship to economic interests of producers.

So you see, the possibilities are limitless. You have the tree. Shape it to your needs. You may create a completely different species!


PROGRAM (the ideological)
1) Goals and objectives
2) Application of the methodology
• in research work
• in training
3) Forms of popular communication used
• in distribution and dissemination
• in materials production
ORGANIZATION
1) Constituencies with whom groups work
2) Organization of the team and division of tasks
3) National impact and regional impact of work on development of grass roots organizations
FINANCING
1) Source of financing
2) Form of production (means of self-sufficiency)
3) Beneficiaries

CREATIVE PROGRAM DESIGNS

At the end of a workshop you may find that many of the participants feel that they have been energized by the process and have a better understanding of the area being collectively investigated. There can, however, still remain a considerable gulf between this new knowledge and the ability to apply it creatively back in one's own community or workplace, much less teach it to others. In Central America, particularly in workshops training popular educators from grass roots groups, there is a phase of *creative planning* for an educational event, which is often added to the end of the training session. The idea is that the popular educators will be able to return to their groups with the outline of a plan that they have thought through with others, but which can also respond to their own particular conditions.

Incorporating this phase of creative planning into the overall training experience not only allows the participating popular educators to go home with a concrete planning tool, but it is also useful in determining how much of the training workshop was actually grasped by those who have just gone through it. In planning a program which the popular educator will use in his/her own organization, a number of fears, uncertainties and confusion may surface which had not been expressed previously and which the group can deal with collectively. The success of the *multiplier effect*, whereby popular educators are able to return to their communities and use what they have just learned, rests both on the appropriation of new knowledge and on the willingness and confidence of participants to apply what has been learned to their own work contexts. In many programs, follow-up is built in so that the same participants come together a second time to share the results of their first programming experiences, identify problems and solutions.

TWO EXAMPLES OF CREATIVE PLANNING

In the Alforja workshop in Mexico with popular educators from Centres in the region, participants selected a number of theme areas for creative planning. We have identified two examples we helped elaborate during the Mexico workshop, and which we feel have some relevance to the Canadian context.

(i) Intervention and militarization, direct and indirect by the U.S. in the region.

(ii) Ways and means to develop popular (grass roots) communication, using *sexism* as a generative theme.

It should be stressed that this particular Alforja workshop was for people who train popular educators, which accounts for a certain level of abstraction in the themes being dealt with. Also a high level of flexibility had to be built into these plans given that the participants came from a number of different countries and would have to adjust the programs to fit their own work contexts. Finally, these plans represent a collective effort under the usual time constraints, which, of course, did not allow for a real test of the plans in an actual community situation. Both plans were developed by groups of participants during the workshop over a two day period as the last phase of the ten day program.

Design Example one:

Central American Solidarity Events

Objective: To strengthen Central American solidarity work in the face of U.S. intervention in the region.

How could we use it?

This program can be adapted for use in Canada by those of us involved in education about Central American issues. It was specifically designed to motivate community interest in Central American solidarity work — and the first section has some good ideas for encouraging participation in a subsequent workshop or program. Specific parts of the design could also be *lifted* for use within workshops or evening sessions, as, for example, part of the last section on dismantling the ideology presented through mass media coverage of Central America. We also hope that the overall program design might suggest ways in which education events on Central America — or other issues— could be thought through — beginning with the need to connect the issues to the experience and interests of the participants. (Also see the earlier discussion of the *Learning Loom*)

'Decoding' the design

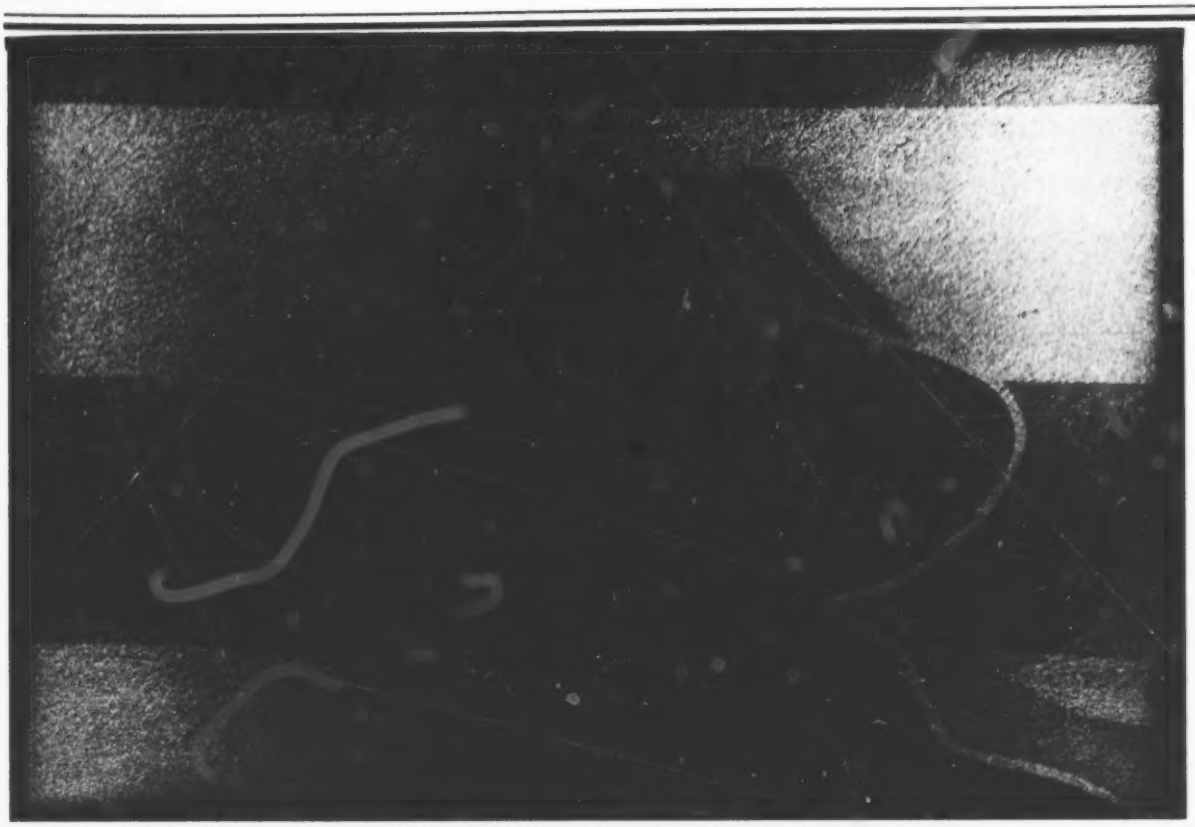
To allow comment on various aspects of the following workshop design, we have broken it up into three pieces: — **the starting point**, **reflection and analysis** and **action**. The various phases of this learning session could be concentrated in the equivalent of a long weekend or spread out over several weeks, a few hours at a time.

Finding the starting point

Those of us involved in trying to design a workshop to meet the objective stated above, decided that *our* starting point had to be an informal poll on the condition of solidarity work back home. We soon discovered that solidarity initiatives were at a low point in several countries while in others support was alive but not growing as before. A common consensus emerged after some discussion that solidarity work in most nations had to have a broader appeal. A challenge for our group was to come up with a fresh approach in order to meet the objective of countering growing U.S. influence in the area. However, with people from different countries involved in our design group, we would need to develop a plan sufficiently flexible to still be applicable in our various contexts.

Next we looked for our *guiding thread* or link, which would connect all the parts of the program we were about to design together. We came to a consensus that a strong awareness of national character or identity was a key factor in motivating people to take a stand against foreign interference whether it be in our own affairs or in the affairs of other countries. So we decided that our design would never stray far from *the relationship between national identity and expressing solidarity with the struggles of other people.*

It is important to underline that in the design of this program we have stressed the importance of holding a number of prior *events* which would attract some new faces and hopefully interest them in becoming workshop participants. The community members taking part in the singing contests, the dance and decorating the locale would be expressing aspects of their culture as they know it,



which leads into the subsequent workshop discussions of individual, collective and national identity. **The participants' starting point** in this learning session, then, is their community, how it expresses itself and how it sees the world. After motivating interest on the part of some community members to participate, the first workshop session begins with the sense people have of their own national identity as a starting point for examining the basis of their solidarity with others.

What does the theme of *national identity* mean for us? The Committee for an Independent Canada and other *nationalist* initiatives have posed the question in terms of our dependent economic and political relationship to the United States. *Canadian identity* has also been framed in cultural terms, referring to the heavy influence of American news agencies and cultural media in the Canadian context. We might also explore *regional* identities — the *Westerner* or the *Maritimer*. Clearly *nationalism* has been an issue in Quebec, where the French language and culture have led to a coherent sense of Québecois identity.

Obviously we would need to adapt this approach to different regions and cultural groupings in Canada, but *national identity* might be a starting point we could creatively explore. However, we would need to be careful. Nationalism can also act as a block to international solidarity, or mask our understanding of the nature of the economic and political structures we need to address if real change is to occur. In using *national identity* as a starting point, we need to be consciously confronting these potential dangers.

The plan for this initial phase was as follows:

GENERAL OBJECTIVE: To support and strengthen solidarity work given growing U.S. involvement in the region

GUIDING THREAD: The relation between our own national identity and solidarity with Central America

PARTICIPANTS: Grass roots groups....with differing levels of organization — maximum 40 participants

OBJECTIVES	THEME(S)	TECHNIQUES	PROCEDURES	TIME	MATERIALS	Logic
Attract potential participants and motivate interest in participating	Motivation & Publicity	A series of activities & community events including: • Singing contest (part A) • Posters • Flyers • Invitations • Bonfires • Puppets	• Calling together the participants • Explain meaning of their participation • Poster making workshop • Planning the events collectively	These initial events would have no specified time period	• Bond paper • Poster ink etc. • Sound system • Musical instruments • Chairs etc. • Lighting • Firewood	Starting point
Begin to introduce the themes	Cultural displays Aspects of economic, political & social crisis	A cultural evening to include: • Photography • Dance • Making decorations • Singing contest (part B)	Preparing: • The locale • Photographic display • Decorations & Posters • Choosing finalists among singers • Organizing the dance	2.45 hrs.	• Photos • Posters • Masking tape • String • Typical decorations • Record player • Tape recorder • Chairs etc.	Starting Point
Create the conditions to recover our own identity	Discovery of: individual, collective, national identity	• *Living* poster* • Flip chart • Plenary session	• By small groups • Plenary with a synthesis	2.00 hrs.	• Flip chart paper • Coloured paper • Objects of value to participants • Newspaper clippings • Masking tape • Magic markers	Starting Point

* *Living Poster*
This involves dressing a participant in a *typical* way — providing the right backdrop, objects of value etc., to illustrate the theme. You could also use a collage, human sculpture etc. in the same way.

Reflection and Analysis

Having attracted our 40 new participants through a series of events requiring community participation, and having moved to a workshop setting to explore the parameters of national identity, we felt that participants would be ready to situate themselves in relation to a wider context. This would be the opportunity for collective reflection on who the major actors are (including ourselves) influencing events in Central America; which actors have most power and what they are doing with it; which others have traditionally had less power and so are having it *done to them*. To be able to *see* and *understand* the forces of domination at work in the area, our design took the following three steps — (the process of abstraction):

- We sought to discover how other Central Americans and U.S. citizens see us (as Nicaraguans, Costa Ricans, etc.) and then establish how we see them. We could also use this approach in Canada, focusing on how our common neighbour, the United States, presents us with similar problems and patterns of development in both the Central American and Canadian contexts.

  One obstacle we would need to be aware of and confront here is the Canadian sense of friendship and close cultural proximity to the United States. The distinction between the American people and the U.S. Administration and economic empire would need to be made.

- Then we wanted to deepen our understanding of the particular identities of countries in the region and the role being played by the U.S.A.

- To see whether this emerging picture of U.S. intervention was more than just a momentary occurence, we needed to gain an historical view of the forces of domination in Central America and around the world. Our adaptation of this plan would need to include a history of U.S. intervention in Canada — both economically and politically.

Our plan for this reflection/analysis/theory stage of the workshop looked like this:

OBJECTIVES	THEME(S)	TECHNIQUES	PROCEDURES	TIME	MATERIALS	LOGIC
Discover how other Central-Americans & U.S. citizens see us - Then how do we see them?	Reformulating regional identity getting to know Central America's nations better	• Jigsaw puzzle (1) • Decode using (1) *adjustable mirror* • Flip chart/plenary	Put together a map of C.A. • Small groups work with country they know best • How we see them/ they see us	3 hrs.	• Construction paper • Marker pens • Masking tape • Flip chart paper	Reflection & Analysis T H E O R I Z I N G
Deepen our understanding of C.A. countries and the role played by the U.S.	Getting an understanding of socio-economic and political situation of each country and relationship to U.S.A.	• A.V. — History of intervention in Central America (part one) (2) • Game Central America • Plenary presentations	• Watch slide show until slide #44 • Discussion in plenary • Create maps in groups of region's countries - using variety of materials	2.45 hrs.	• Slide projector • Tape recorder • Paper • Magazines • Slides • Newspapers • Markers • Scissors/glue • Document detailing interventions	
Gain an historical view of forces of domination	The global pattern of domination: • economic & political Recovering the history of intervention • socio cultural • military • political • popular resistance	• Starpower • Small groups with questions • Plenary • Fable of identity & role playing • Exercise in comparative history	Use and decode starpower. • relate questions to national identity and regional map • plenary synthesis & comments from coordinator People relate country to an animal - written on paper and put in hat • Draw from hat & mime — relate to country • Conclusions	3 hrs. 20 min.	• Coloured cards • Flip chart • Tape • Loose leaf paper • Scissors • Markers • Hat or box	

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(1) The countries of Central America (and Mexico, U.S.A. and Canada) are in pieces and are reassembled together as a puzzle. The decoding has two columns on the flip chart: How they see us — how we see them, called the *adjustable mirror*.

(2) This slide show was put together by the Alforja network and involves a *bird's eye view* of the region — the bird, flying over, sees the U.S. warships and takes us back in history...

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Acting on what we've learned

By now, participants would have taken a look at a pattern of economic and political domination in the hemisphere, first by colonial powers and then by the U.S.A. Not made explicit thus far in the design was a level of ideological domination which would best be understood back in the context of the immediate community, looking at the influence that mass media, education and religion have on us all. As a way of looking at the media, for example, the plan suggests using *theatre journalism.* Participants are asked to form small groups to discuss and dramatize a news report based on information about an event. Contradictory reports of the same event would be given to the different groups. The debriefing following the presentation of the dramatizations would focus on who is responsible for the way most events get reported and whose interests these reports serve.

To counter elements of a world view being constantly communicated by foreign interests, community members participating in this learning session need to give new meaning to the concept of national identity. Our workshop design suggests that new songs could be written to reflect how participants now view the hemisphere and their country's part in events there. At the end of the workshop everyone would have a chance to share in putting together an initial plan of action to help guide future solidarity work in the community and beyond.

A Canadian adaptation could use most of this final section *as is* — if your *starting point related to national identity. The theatre journalism* described above is a very useful technique for looking at different interests behind *the news.*

OBJECTIVE	THEME	TECHNIQUES	PROCEDURES	TIME	MATERIALS	LOGIC
Look at how ideological domination is affecting us now	Dismantling the ideology presented through mass media Looking critically at other ideological apparatus, (religion, school, etc.)	Theatre journalism Video & cassette recordings	Based on information about one event two contradictory reports are chosen then in 4 groups/Each gets one of the reports and is asked to dramatize it. - recording sermons of priest of sects - interview priests - propaganda on dangers to family life	1.00 hr 30 mins	Newspaper clippings Magazines Video Tape recorder	ACTING ON WHAT WE'VE LEARNED
Begin to look for the ways and means to recover national and regional identity	Reformulate the meaning of national identity	Living poster	Participants take the idea of original living poster - Redo it and contrast it to the first one	1.00 hr	Coloured sheets of paper - Objects - Masking tape - Markers - Scissors	
	Reformulating regional identity Solidarity - a creative work plan	The new songs Brainstorming with cards	Based on this work and the context of regional analysis in small groups develop a song which summarizes main points	2.00 hrs - Plenary - Divide into 3 groups & each group gets 12 cards to fill out 3 for *what* 3 for *for whom* 3 for *why* 3 for *how* This is then shared back & an initial outline of an overall plan is put together	3.00 hrs 1.0 hr	

Another design example: examining sexism

The second program design we want to examine was developed at the Alforja workshop around the theme of sexism. Rather than outline the entire plan here, we'll focus instead on the **creativity** involved in recreating tools and adapting them for use outside of formal learning events.

To briefly give the context first: the objective of this program was to stimulate reflection by a community (group) on their own sexist attitudes and behaviors. This deeper understanding of how sexism permeates our daily activity would hopefully motivate people toward change, not only personal change but more importantly social change that challenges the structural roots of sexism.

The plan for a community program around this theme followed the three major stages of learning events outlined in the *learning loom:* Starting with our own experiences (practice), deepening our analysis (theory), and developing new ways of acting based on our new understanding (practice). We'll consider three different moments of this process in which there was tremendous creativity applied to the development of education tools:

1) In the initial stage of identifying the perceptions of the participants, there were several creative ways of **researching** or surveying the opinions of the community;
2) In the process of deepending the analysis, there was a **popular theatre** presentation on sexism that involved the audience in innovative ways;
3) In further stages of theorizing, participants were involved in learning to **decode** or analyze various **cultural forms of communication** for their sexist content.

We feel that these three activities have real applicability in the Canadian context as well, so they are outlined here.

Researching the attitudes of the participants

To identify sexist attitudes and to motivate discussion around the issue, the popular educators working on this program used the technique of provoking reactions from people without their realizing their attitudes were being tested. This was done in several ways:

1
VISUAL PROVOCATION

Circulating a sexist cartoon around mealtime and noting different people's responses to it;

2
GRAFFITI BOARD

Posting a graffiti board that merely said: Down with male chauvinism! Down with feminism, too! It invited passers-by to scribble their comments on the poster.

3
INTERVIEWS

Certain members of the community were interviewed and asked to reflect on ways that sexism was reflected in the workshop itself;
Some were selected specifically because they had been involved in incidents that had provoked charges of sexism. Stories of these events were retold from the various perspectives of different people.

4
POSTERS

The most insightful and provocative comments were extracted from the transcribed interviews. These quotes became titles for a series of posters that incorporated the photos. As these were posted in various spots, they stimulated even more reflection and conversation about the issue of sexism.

5
PHOTO ANALYSIS

A series of polaroid photographs that had been taken throughout the workshop were used as a kind of Q-sort. That is, an interviewee was asked to review the photos, select out those which reflected sexism in any form, and discuss each chosen photo. This photo interview was tape-recorded and transcribed.

6
NEWSLETTER

These comments by participants formed the core for a newsletter which was produced in one day and circulated the next. By re-presenting peoples' stories to them, even more discussion of the issue was generated;

All of the above examples are creative and simple ways of gathering the opinions of a community and re-presenting them back to that community. They involve people more actively in the data-collection (cartoon provocation, graffiti board, interviews, photo analysis) and feed the results back in creative forms (newsletter, posters) that keep the discussions alive and deepening.

How could we use these ideas...?

Simple participatory research techniques can be used before or at the beginning of learning events to identify the perceptions participants have on the key issue.

Popular theatre where spectators have the final word

The various responses of the community to the provocations described above gave the planning team something serious to consider: Attitudes such as sexism are deeply ingrained in personal behavior and can cause tremendous interpersonal tensions. It is an explosive issue precisely because of this. How, then, can the issue be represented back to the community in a way that not only the personal manifestations but also the structural origins of sexism that sexism is seen as part of a broader social structure that oppresses not only because of gender but also because of class, race, age, etc...?

The form chosen was popular theatre. The first scene is a courtroom, where a young working class man is being tried for attempted rape of a neighbor woman. The judge calls upon witnesses, which include the owner/manager of the factory where he works (that produces pornographic magazines), a local teacher, and the head of a Feminist League. Each, in turn, speaks against the defendant.

When he is asked at last to respond, the worker admits that he is not *innocent*, but he asks that he have a chance to tell his story. The rest of the play is thus a dramatization of a day-in-the-life of this man:

- The protagonist leaves home in the morning, from inadequate housing in a poor barrio, his wife overworked and isolated.
- As he walks toward the bus stop, he is bombarded by sexist images in the advertising on billboards, walls, etc. (In the drama, 8 people become the walls, each holding sexist ads that seduce the worker as he walks along.)

- He encounters the boss's secretary at the bus stop. They get on the bus together, flirting with each other. Again, sexist ads surround them inside the bus.
- The man arrives at the factory, and is greeted by a co-worker who has just brought some fresh pin-ups to paste on the wall beside their machine.
- He spends the day as a press operator, cranking out pornographic magazines.
- During the day, he needs to check a production detail with the owner/manager of the plant. He inadvertently walks into the owner's office, only to find the secretary making out with the boss.
- At the end of the work day, he stops by a bar and exchanges stories of sexual exploits with a local teacher, who has been *putting the make* on his students.
- After several beers, he arrives home, to find his wife chatting with a neighbor, while the TV blasts sexist commercials and TV programs in the background.
- When his wife leaves for a quick errand, the drunken worker begins molesting the visiting neighbor woman.

Here the action freezes and we return to the courtroom. The judge asks for 8 volunteers from the audience to serve as the jury: Is this man guilty or not?

The eight jury members, participants in the workshop, are thus brought into the drama. Each expresses his/her opinion, covering a range of attitudes, but each also trying to probe some of the origins of the criminal behavior. The drama has re-presented a number of institutional supports of sexism so that it stimulates a structural rather than just a personal analysis of the problem. Let's review some of these elements of institutionalized sexism:

- A class system which oppresses workers and doubly exploits working class women, powerlessness breeding violence;
- Media and advertising as the pervasive educational arms of an economic system that uses women to sell goods for profit, selling also a degrading image of women;
- Workplace hierarchies which perpetuate class inequities and double standards between workers and managers;
- Sexist hierarchies present in all other social institutions (like schools and churches), thus reinforcing an exploitation of women by men.

Thus the economic bases in the society that breed inequality and violence, as well as the ideological forms which reinforce this sexism were revealed in the drama and subsequent analysis.

The actual drama as it is described here surely represented a blatant exaggeration of these elements, compressing them into one scenario. It is our challenge to use popular education methods also to dig into the more subtle forms that sexism takes in a myriad of small (and often less visible) ways in our daily lives.

The involvement of the audience in the jury is a device worth noting. Spectators were not told what to think, but were given the elements in reality (through the play) to make their own analysis. By allowing 8 people to express themselves, and, in fact, take responsibility for the verdict, spectators were brought totally into the action. The analysis was made collective.

Decoding sexist cultural forms

As another way of developing analytical skills of participants, a series of mini-workshops were organized around different cultural forms of communication: cartoons, ads, pop songs, proverbs, magazine stories, and self-analysis quizzes. Each group was given a list of questions to use in critically decoding the sexism in both the content and form they were given. These were some of the results:

- The ads were made into a collage to accentuate the sexism implicit in many of the images they use.
- The cartoons were analyzed then redrawn to be free of sexist content.
- The romantic song, so common in Central America, and often explicitly sexist, was first analyzed carefully; all sexist words and phrases were underlined; then the song was rewritten with respect for equality of the sexes.

Groups had 1-2 hours to decode their given cultural form and to recreate it for presentation to the large group. The collages and rewritten songs were new codes that involved all participants in looking critically at how thoroughly sexism permeates society. The skill developed through these activities is called in Spanish *desmontaje ideológico*, or literally *taking apart the ideology*. When we begin to see how the dominant cultural values — whether they be classism, racism, or sexism — bombard us daily in every simple (and even popular) form of communication, we are better ready to critique and counter those deformations. An active and creative response is to recreate the forms (such as the song, sayings, etc.), so that they no longer oppress.

But that does not resolve the deeper problem: a political-economic structure which perpetuates inequality. In this instance, the *Social Tree* analysis is useful. We can recognize the various forms of communications as aspects of the ideology in our society that only reflect and reinforce the political and economic base. Understanding and tackling the ideological forms is part of a broader process of working toward fundamental change of the entire system.

In this *taking apart of the ideology*, popular education plays a special role. We know that traditional education itself is a cultural form, a perpetuator of ideology. We learn how to *take it apart* or critically analyze it in the process of creating an alternative, more popular education. And, in turn, popular education can provide some analytical tools that help us *take apart* the whole picture, the entire social structure, so that we better understand the deeper roots of injustice, not just the ideological expressions of that injustice.

In summary

As Canadian educators participating in the design of these two concrete examples, we learned a great deal. The process underlined for us that popular education work occurs in a variety of life situations and not only in a more structured workshop format. Reaching out to involve new faces in our work often requires a pre-workshop period of community/cultural events which stimulate people's interest in participating in a more organized learning situation. As the design in these two examples indicates, a great deal of planning and prior thought goes into making a successful program, all the while allowing for the flexibility to change the plan if directions other than those encompassed in the design emerge. Often we need to create or adapt techniques to meet the objectives of a specific part of the program — and one does not have to be an *expert* to do that.

Using the creative planning process at the end of the workshop allowed us to use and adapt what we had been learning from each other about popular education theory. In this workshop, the program exercise was useful for all participants in a number of concrete ways:

- it facilitated **creative thinking about themes of importance** in our work
- participants left the workshop with a number of **concrete program designs** to adapt to their own constituencies and countries
- it helped each of us identify points needing further clarification in order to ensure effective **use of the planning tool**
- **new techniques** were created and old ones recreated in the process.
- and **it was fun!**

NEW WAYS OF DOING OLD TASKS

Some thoughts on using techniques

Popular education sessions are attractive to many educators who value creativity and flexibility in educational programming. However popular education workshops or events require a great deal of careful thought and planning. Precise objectives for each stage need to be set as well as objectives for the overall session. As with any work tool, the knowledge of how, when and where to use techniques is crucial. In general terms we can say that techniques should be used with the express purpose of arriving at an agreed upon objective. In choosing which technique to employ we should be quite clear what objective it is that we wish to accomplish. Generally speaking one technique is usually not sufficient to investigate a theme. Usually it needs to be combined with others to allow a group to deepen its understanding of the areas under consideration. It is also important to be familiar with the particular characteristics of each technique, its possibilities and its limits. We must also know the right moment to introduce it into the event and be able to explain the rules clearly and concisely. Techniques are tools to be used with plenty of imagination, and often need to be creatively adapted, not only to meet the groups' objectives but also to suit the *culture* of the participants in the workshop. Finally, techniques used in learning events need to be de-mystified so that others can use them with the same clarity and creativity that we have.

If you decide to try out the *learning loom* outlined earlier, you will probably discover, as we did, a need to either create, seek out or adapt techniques to suit your planning objectives for a workshop or educational event. Educators in Central America certainly have felt those needs, and during a workshop held in Guadalajara, Mexico, in May 1984, a number of *new* techniques emerged from the remoulding of *old* ones. A limited number of these techniques have been tried out in the Canadian context, often with further alterations to better adapt them to our own situation. What follows then are some things we've tried, and others we haven't, but think might work in our context.

Lifeboats* — A technique for getting to know each other and build group spirit

Time: ½-2 hours

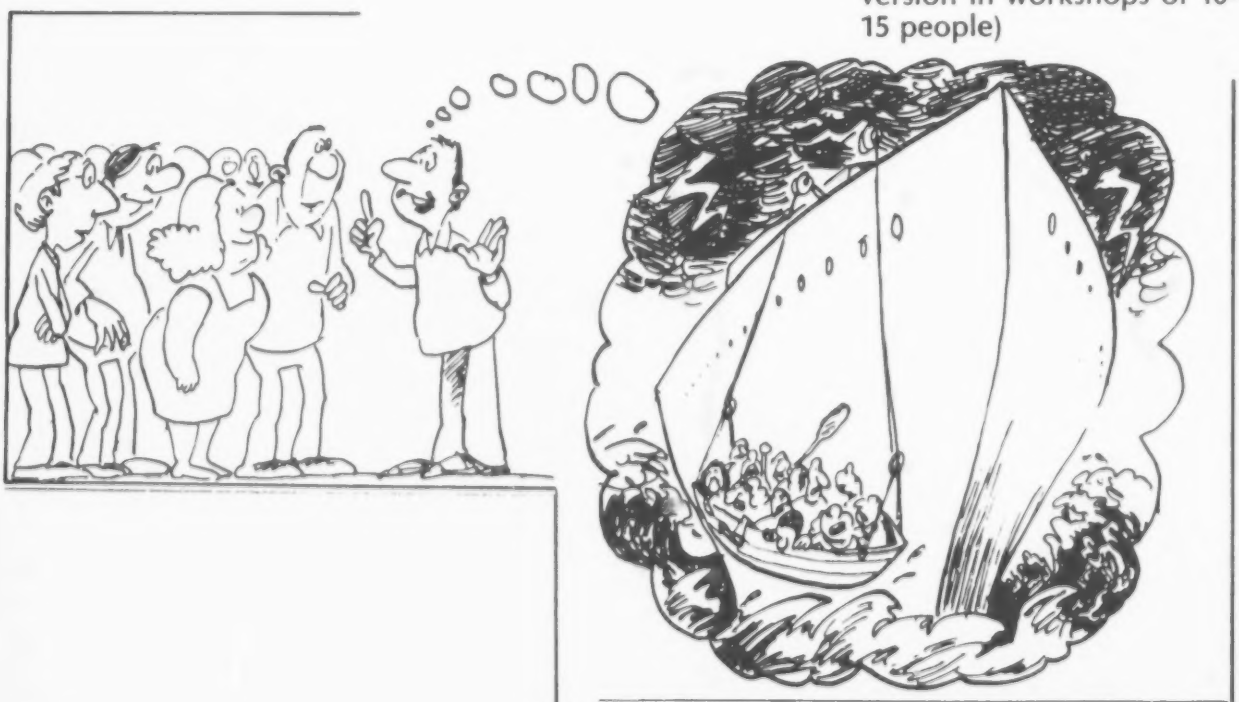
Objectives:
- participants get to know each other and have a sense of group
- begin to buld group spirit
- have fun and relax

Why: Get people up on their feet and beginning to mix

Who: People from different parts of an organization or province/from different organizations or provinces

How many: 25-50 people (although we have also used a shortened version in workshops of 10-15 people)

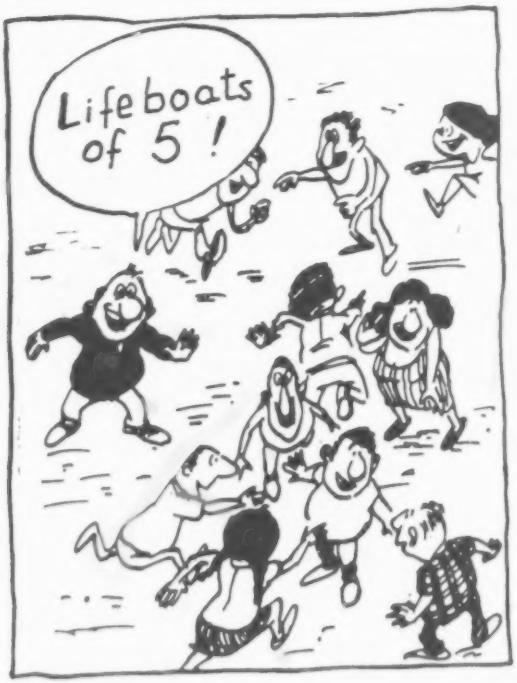
One old task we often face beginning a workshop is having participants introduce themselves. Going around the room or introducing a neighbour are the usual ways this task has been accomplished. However, when there are quite a number of participants involved in a workshop, people start to tune out or get restless as you reach the twentieth name or so. An alternative which will get large groups of people up on their feet, actively learning about others is a technique called *Lifeboats*.



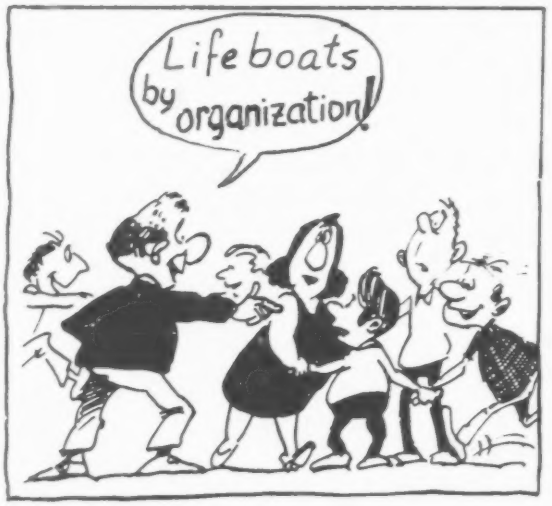
*We have used this technique in two large workshops: one with 50 members of the development education community from across Canada and another with 40 food industry workers, farmers and fishermen in PEI.

Procedure

Share with the group the object of the exercise. Then explain that we are on a ship which has started to sink and we will have to evacuate into lifeboats. However, everyone will have to listen carefully to make sure that they are in the right lifeboat and once there, stay close together (maybe join hands) so as to avoid falling.



The facilitator can then call out distinguishing features for the lifeboats based on particularities of the group that it might be interesting to highlight. **For example:**



Boats might be formed by province that you live in and then by place of birth, with a separate boat for those born outside Canada. While participants are in the lifeboats, the facilitator can identify each province or country, the numbers in each boat as well as have people identify who they are and what they do (very briefly) while still in a *boat*. People can also be asked to move into boats by organization or union affiliation. Once in those boats, people can be asked to give their name, organization/union and what they do there.

Often it may be important to highlight the ratio of male to female participants who have come in representation of others. This can be accomplished by having people go into one lifeboat for women and another for men. To avoid the process dragging, the facilitator should try and ensure that things keep moving with the right balance of lifeboats and tasks to do in each boat. Besides names, different information could be shared after each change in the group's makeup.

An element of excitement can be added by making an announcement that numbers of people in each lifeboat have become important. Too many we sink and too few we capsize. Then participants can be asked to move quickly into boats of 6 or 8 and so on. Choosing multiples that divide into the total number of participants ensures that no one needs to be left out — or the leftovers can get into your boat!

Considerations

There are innumerable options for the naming of your lifeboats depending on where the participants are coming from. Careful selection of these options can underscore strengths and deficiencies in the makeup of the group — should this be important.

More time can be spent in the smaller lifeboats trying to learn names by having a ball tossed around in each group with participants calling out the name of the person to whom they are about to throw the ball. (You can't throw it to the same person twice in a row.) A *ball* can be made from a crushed up piece of old newsprint.

Questions which relate to a province, organization, historical event of relevance to the workshop can be prepared ahead of time and drawn from a hat at different points in the exercise by an individual, who gets help from the group in his/her boat in coming up with the answer.

Recommendation

The more time you have for the initial phase of introductions and group building the more variations in the lifeboat technique you can use. However, the facilitator should be conscious of keeping the whole process moving and not bogging down in discussion at any point.

Collecting participant expectations for the workshop

Another old task facing facilitators is to be able to get a sense of participant expectations. Sometimes the organizers of a particular session will know what most people hope to get out of the event, but not always. One way to elicit more information from the participants themselves which will help ensure that the workshop is on the right track, is to provide a grafitti mural entitled *Fears and Fantasies*.

Fears and Fantasies grafitti mural

Time: At a coffee break, overnight, between sessions

Objectives:
- to make explicit participant expectations for the workshop or program
- to allow people to express thoughts on the workshop with some anonymity

Why: Adjust workshop format if necessary to meet majority's expectations and needs

How many: Unlimited

Procedure

Headline two pieces of flip chart paper, one with **Fears** and the other with **Fantasies**. Explain to participants that this is their grafitti board, their way of letting the facilitator(s) know what hopes and worries they have about the workshop/program. The facilitator should indicate where the grafitti board will be located and how long it will be up. It should also be pointed out how the information will be useful to the workshop/program.

Presenting our work to others

Another task we have all had to perform at one point or another is to present our work or the work of our organization to others. At first glance it might appear to be a rather burdensome task to be expedited as quickly as possible, but in fact the opportunity to present our work can be turned to our advantage, even involving those who didn't expect to be anything but listeners, in recreating important aspects of our past work.

In the Guadalajara workshop, all the participating popular education centres were asked to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their previous year's work. Each one prepared a reflective document which they shared with the rest of us. However, in order to promote discussion and as a way of highlighting the main points in that document, each centre also carried out a creative presentation to help motivate collective reflection and comments on their work.

Various centres used creative formats such as:

1. Wall Theatre

A giant serpentining shape was drawn on a long piece of newsprint paper. A headines-form text interspersed by photographs of actual educational events which had occurred during the course of the previous year allowed us to visually capture the flow of events as well as the changes in pedagogical approach.

2. A Fable, spontaneously acted out

One member of a popular education centre read aloud a fable which contained the major points of reflection regarding the previous year's work. Participants from other centres were invited to spontaneously act out in a manner which would illustrate the important lessons learned, the various stages of the fable as they unfolded.

3. Video Soap Opera

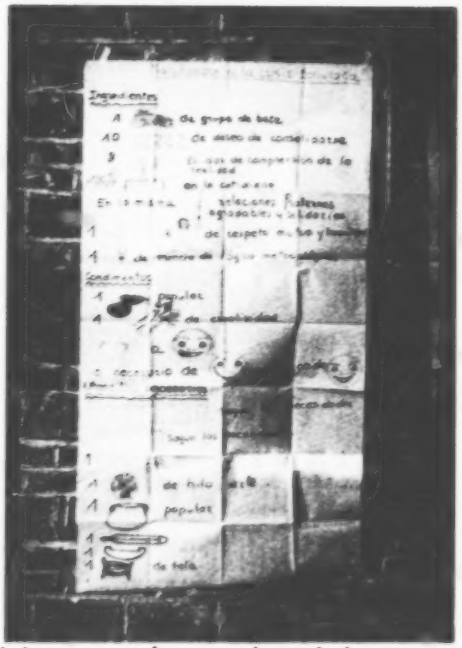
The coordinating team from Alforja's Costa Rica office prepared a video tape which had as main characters two men and a woman. Romantic tension was built in to a comparison of the effects of banking education as practiced by one of the men and popular education as practised by the other (representing the centre's experience).

It is important to note that following each presentation, there was a discussion of the main problems and possibilities raised. These were noted under headings, which later formed the basis for small group reflection.

Reporting back

There are many ways we can recreate techniques to make normal tasks more lively. In these photos are four examples of creative ways members of the Alforja network have presented information and the results of discussions back to a group:

Puppets do the talking at a Nicaragua workshop.



A Bolivian team has analyzed the economic crisis and their grass roots work with a women's group in the form of a recipe.

Community issues are identified through placards and banners at the regional workshop in Mexico.

A photo-story was produced to identify problems in the development of peasant cooperatives in Panama.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

We began this booklet by looking at early adult education experiences in Canada, and in the process, started to uncover the context which *frames* much of our work today.

We also explored popular education efforts in Central America and looked at one specific initiative there, Alforja. The second section, *Some New Designs* was a chance for collective reflection on our own practice, using the *filter* of Alforja's experience in planning and carrying out popular education programs. This third section returns us to our own context and the tasks at hand, with, it is hoped, some new insights and a few additional tools to get the job done.

We are now in a position to explore some possibilities for action which will support our organizing and popular education efforts here in Canada. As this booklet suggests, our work has been enriched through contact with Central American popular educators. So to begin this section, we want to describe some initiatives we've had a hand in, which have put popular educators here in touch with Central Americans. We hope that you might be interested in exploring these and other exchange possibilities.

The second purpose of this section is to begin to examine ways in which we as popular educators can connect with each other, in order to improve our work and strengthen the movements we are suporting. Here again, we will borrow from the Central American experience, in particular from the way in which Alforja has built its network.

Making connections with Central America

Although there are evident differences in the contexts in which we work as popular educators in Canada and Central America, there are considerable areas of common concern and struggle which connect us. The hope for peace, equality and justice and for more participatory forms of democracy are ideals which motivate both oppositional forces to the authoritarian military regimes in Central America, and social change activists who are the backbone of many of the movements which are alive today in Canada. Organized working people, both here and in Central America, are often singled out as one of the main obstacles to *economic progress* by conservative governments clearly and consciously acting on behalf of dominant economic interests. We are both up against the same system.

To begin a concerted effort to address this web of economic, social and political issues, we can learn from the experience of popular educators in Central America. An exchange of educational methodology can enrich our own practice. We can learn a great deal from the role popular educators have played in the massive, organized response of Central Americans to their deteriorating situation. Through our exchange, we can develop an increased capacity for critical reflection and analysis which will be key to the success of our future actions in support of the struggle for fundamental social change.

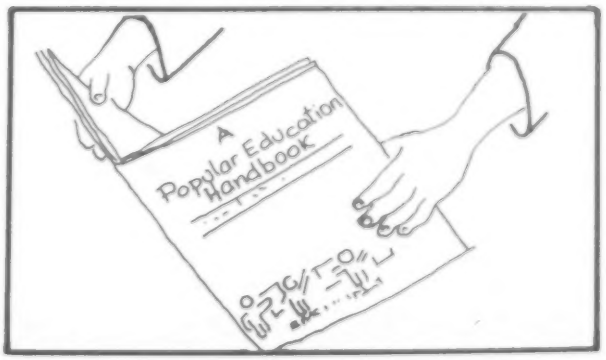
Crossing Canada for Solidarity

Some initiatives

The three of us have been involved in a number of programs to put both grassroots sectors and popular educators here in touch with their counterparts in Central America — particularly Nicaragua. In 1981 a first initiative was launched by the Participatory Research Group which organized the Popular Education Conference, *Breaking Ground*, held in Toronto. This conference brought together educators, primarily from Ontario and Quebec, to discuss three exciting educational initiatives: - the literacy program in Nicaragua, the work of the Highlander Centre in Tennessee, and the experiences of the Canadian Institute for Adult Education (ICEA) in Quebec. Francisco Lacayo, who was representing Nicaragua's Ministry of Adult Education at the conference, was also interested in work being done with photostories related to the *English in the Workplace* programs in Toronto. As a result, one of us, Deborah Barndt, was invited to work with Nicaraguan educators in Managua for several months. This was the beginning of ongoing exchanges.

A second initiative was **Testimonios de Nicaragua**, a solidarity tour combined with a photographic exhibit which focused on education and culture in Nicaragua. Deb and fellow photographer, Daniel Caselli, toured Canada with this exhibit in 1982. Besides discussing the exhibit, they conducted training workshops with Canadians interested in the area of culture and education. They were joined in this venture by Nydia Bustos, who, as a member of MECATE (a Nicaraguan initiative in recording and promoting peasant culture) was interested in sharing her experiences with Canadians.

Beginning in late 1982, two of us, Bev Burke and Rick Arnold, (both former CUSO field staff in Central America), helped design and facilitate some 40 workshops held across Canada. These sessions explored the relevance of popular education methodology and techniques developed *in* Central America to education programs *about* Central America in Canada. Although primarily aimed at those involved in work on Central America, the workshops attracted a cross-section of groups including women's organizations, peace groups and many others interested in re-thinking their approach to education programming. The experience was documented in **A Popular Education Handbook,** published in October, 1983.

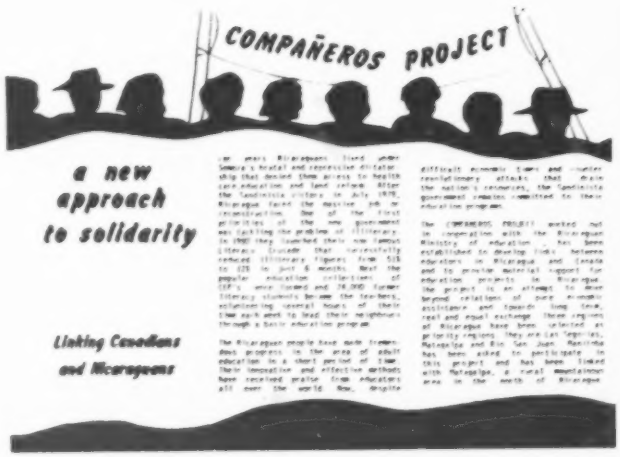


In 1982, members of the British Columbia Teachers Federation organized a successful tour to Nicaragua, meeting with their sister Federation, ANDEN. The next year, a tour of adult educators and some activist public school teachers was organized from Ontario. Once in Nicaragua, they worked with both ANDEN and the Ministry of Adult Education, in programs which put the Canadians in touch with popular educators in grass-roots organizations there. On return all of these educators have played an important role in organizing support for Nicaragua in their own communities.

One of the special mechanisms that has developed for maintaining ongoing exchange between popular educators in Canada and Nicaragua is the Compañeros Project. It was launched at the International Conference of Popular Education and Peace, held in Managua in September, 1983. The International Council for Adult Education and the Participatory Research Group of Canada were two of the organizers of this inter-American event. The eight Canadian delegates from Labrador to B.C. came back

and organized pilot projects which twinned three regions of Nicaragua with educators in three parts of Canada.

To further develop these relationships, the Participatory Reseach Group organized a Canadian tour of three Nicaraguan adult educators in September 1984. Organizers in each of the 8 Canadian cities used the tour to broaden and strengthen their own local networks of popular educators, in one instance setting up an ongoing monthly reflection on their work. The Compañeros project with Nicaragua has taken many forms which include the exchange of popular education materials and methods, visits by educators in both directions, and greater involvement of Canadian educators in solidarity work. Since May 1985, there has been a Canadian CUSO cooperant, Heather Chetwynd, working in the Nicaraguan Education Ministry to help coordinate future north-south links between popular educators.



While most of our efforts to date have concentrated on exchanges with Nicaraguan educators, we were also involved in the visit to Canada of exiled members of the Guatemalan theatre group, Teatro Vivo. While their major activity in Canada was the presentation and discussion of two of their plays, Teatro Vivo also implemented workshops with educators interested in the use of theatre as an educational tool. There have been, of course, many other cultural tours from Central America that we haven't had a hand in! If you would like to find out about these and other projects which we couldn't describe here, you might consult the Central American group in your local area. Also, many of the initiatives outlined above are ongoing, so if you would be interested in getting involved in them, write to us — the address is at the back of the book.

When we introduced Alforja in Section 1, we mentioned a number of ways in which we have connected with the work they are doing: — attending their yearly evaluation and creativity sessions, exchanging materials, and organizing the visit of two Alforja members to Canada in May/June of 1985. This publication — as well as Rick and Bev's **Popular Education Handbook** — were stimulated by the Alforja experience. What we would like to do now is to take a brief look at aspects of the Alforja network which might provide us with a few new ideas on how we Canadians might better *connect* with each other, and what some of the possible benefits might be.

The Alforja "Network" as one model...

In the Central American context, the Alforja network allows member educators, often working in very different political contexts, to pool their understanding and knowledge of events in the isthmus and thus **gain an overview of the major economic, political and ideological forces at work**. By getting together regularly, these educators have been able to begin a collective process of **reflection on their educational practice**, sharing strengths and weaknesses in the education/organizing efforts by each country. Regional meetings have helped **foster a cooperative spirit** among the associated centres, and increasingly, popular educators with specific skills are travelling to other countries to support programs being implemented there. Through regional workshops and the efforts of the Alforja permanent team in Costa Rica, **a record** is being developed of everything the members are doing in their respective nations. This record becomes a written *memory* of what has been tried before. Old mistakes can be avoided, faulty program designs improved, and new breakthroughs collectivized so as to enrich the practice of all popular educators in the area. Alforja's permanent team not only records educational experiences but also **collectivizes the results** through a series of low cost publications which are sent out to all the associated centres. **Production of audio-visual and print materials,** although likely to remain primarily the work of individual centres, responding to their own immediate realities, are increasingly being co-produced. This coordination of productions avoids duplication, encourages the pooling of limited resources and allows regional issues to be addressed.

In Nicaragua, an exciting new initiative is underway which is called the *methodological school*. This *school* is a place where educators connected to Nicaragua's grassroots organizations can reflect together on the variety of education programs and events they are involved in. The *School* encourages participants to get peer assistance in designing new approaches to programs which they can try out back in their communities. Later, they will return to the *school* with the results, and adjustments, if necessary, can be made in the original program design. Presently the participants are meeting every three months in a series of week long workshops. Much as the *methodological school* has been a supportive mechanism for grassroots educators in Nicaragua, Alforja acts as a **support network for educators** in the region involved in training popular educators from base organizations, giving them a chance to reflect systematically on their work. What ideas can we draw from these experiences as we try to construct our own network in Canada?

Making connections among ourselves

Recently attempts have been made in Canada to put popular educators in touch with each other. As we have just seen, the Alforja experience in Central America suggests that there is a great deal to be gained by having a network we can shape so that it responds to our needs. We need some way of connecting our own valuable educational approaches — exchanging theory, methodology and techniques to enrich all our programs. Regularly held sessions could help us collectively reflect on and evaluate our work. Learning from our own practice might also lead to the further development of a *Canadian* popular education methodology, better suited to our own context. In getting together and comparing notes, we would also be in a position to identify areas for further attention. For example, Section 1 suggests that much of our history remains hidden and needs to be *recovered*. A functioning network could be instrumental in helping us record our planning efforts and workshop results so that we can immediately begin to avoid the most common pitfalls, while benefiting from the breakthroughs Canadian educators are making. If we had a connecting mechanism in place which could facilitate exchanges with popular educators from other countries it would allow us to continue learning from other experiences, while sharing our own advances.

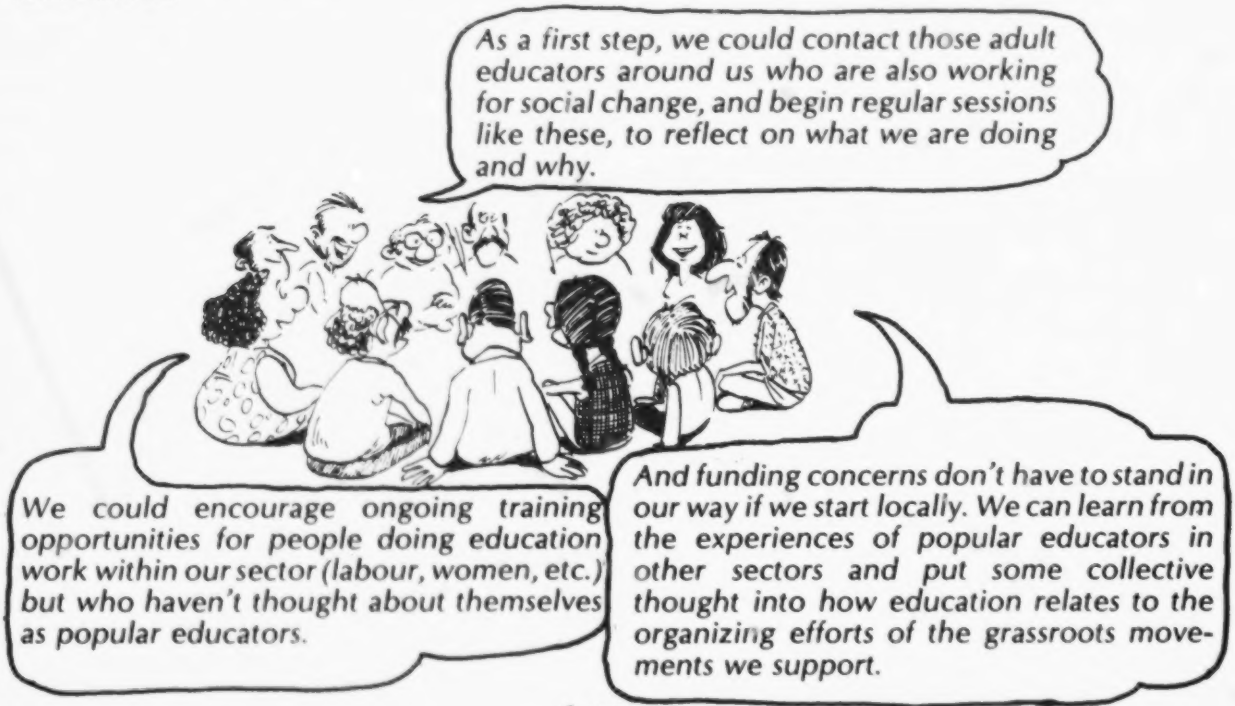
It is not, of course, going to be easy to connect. There are a number of constraints to be faced in any attempt to build a network in Canada. The geography of this vast country plays a major role in keeping us apart, separates us from a wider community of popular educators. It is sometimes difficult to decide *who* we should be connecting with! We don't have an agreed upon understanding of what popular education is in the Canadian context and we lack an organization or structure which could facilitate that discussion.

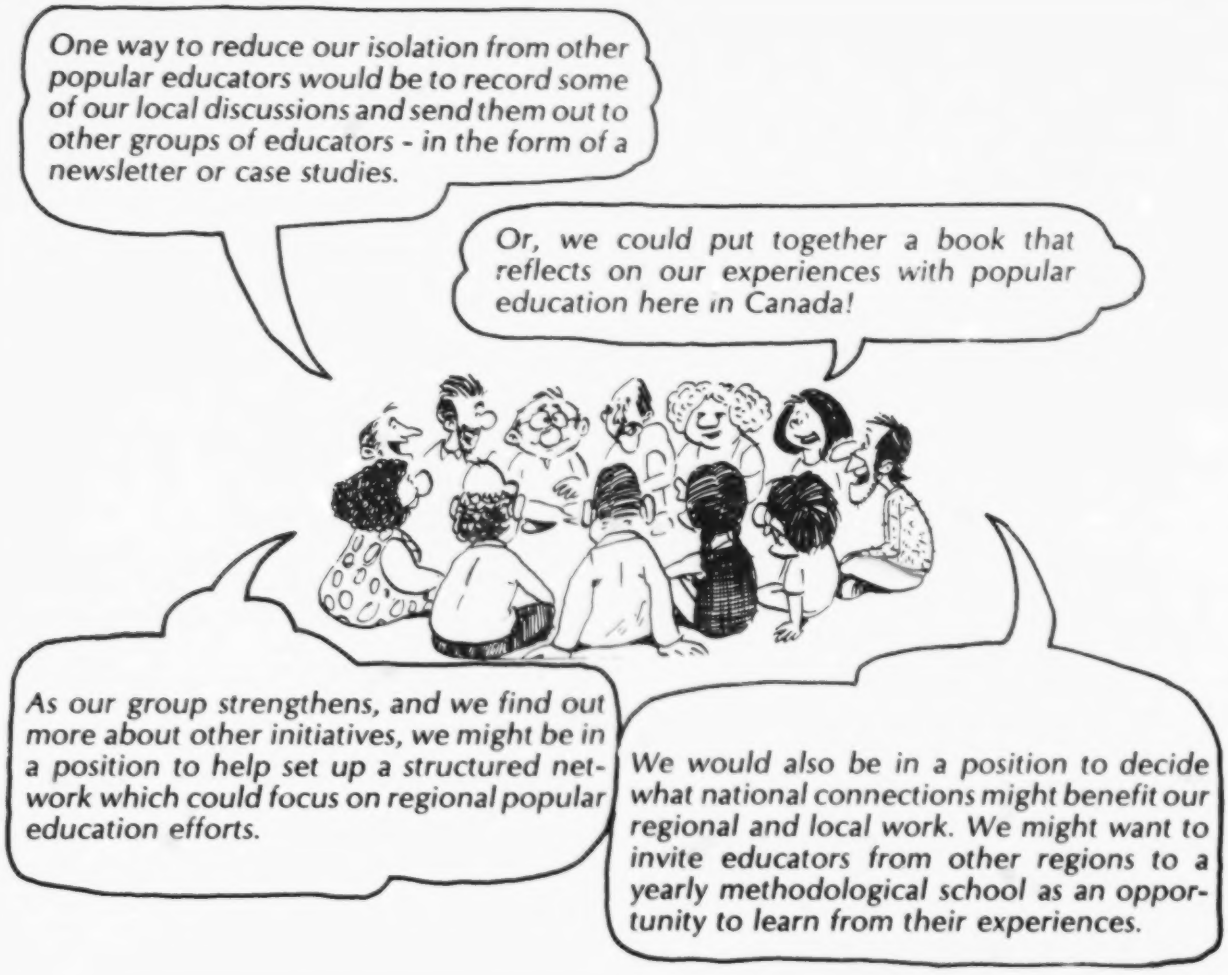
Many of us, who see ourselves as working for social change in this country, are employed by institutions that do not fully appreciate or even support the work that we do. As a result, our relations with other popular educators have been haphazard and infrequent. Unlike the Alforja example, we do not have a number of regionally based popular education centres in place which could help end our isolation. Funding constraints, particularly in these more conservative times, are real, and affect our ability to tackle many of the organizational problems which stand between us and fellow educators.

The tasks ahead may be difficult but they are not impossible. As we take our first steps in the process, these are some of the basic questions we might want to address:

- What is the relationship of our education-/organizing work to the movements for social change in Canada?
- How can we organize ourselves as popular eductors?
- What are the most appropriate forms of exchange for us in the Canadian context?

Let's join that group of educators we met earlier from a variety of constituencies to discuss new directions we can take, while bearing in mind the constraints we've outlined above.


As a first step, we could contact those adult educators around us who are also working for social change, and begin regular sessions like these, to reflect on what we are doing and why.
We could encourage ongoing training opportunities for people doing education work within our sector (labour, women, etc.) but who haven't thought about themselves as popular educators.
And funding concerns don't have to stand in our way if we start locally. We can learn from the experiences of popular educators in other sectors and put some collective thought into how education relates to the organizing efforts of the grassroots movements we support.


One way to reduce our isolation from other popular educators would be to record some of our local discussions and send them out to other groups of educators - in the form of a newsletter or case studies.
Or, we could put together a book that reflects on our experiences with popular education here in Canada!
As our group strengthens, and we find out more about other initiatives, we might be in a position to help set up a structured network which could focus on regional popular education efforts.
We would also be in a position to decide what national connections might benefit our regional and local work. We might want to invite educators from other regions to a yearly methodological school as an opportunity to learn from their experiences.

And so with these popular educators, drawn from a variety of sectors we have begun the discussion of a *Canadian connection* which can put us in regular contact with each other, provide opportunities to nurture our work, while also challenging us to find new ways to improve future programs. We hope you'll join us in the design of a Canadian popular education network. There's a place at the end of the book for noting your ideas and experiences.

Our discussions, of course, are ongoing. We'll look forward to hearing from you!

Appendix

ALFORJA'S SIX MEMBER CENTRES

1. Social Training Centre - Panama (CCS)

The oldest of the non-formal adult education centres in the region dating back to 1962. It supports the development of community organizations, Christian groups and workers' associations with training workshops in social analysis, leadership skills, community development and the use of popular communication techniques like theatre, music, graphics. For the past 18 years, CCS also has published a monthly magazine, **Dialogo Social**, and has had its own print shop. A separate, but supportive audio-visual production centre has also been established.

2. Research and Social Action Centre - Panama (CEASPA)

Since its beginning in 1977, CEASPA has carried out major projects of social research on current Central American issues (e.g. militarization, theology, political parties, cost of living etc.). Their research is identified as *action research* because the topics studied are social problems and the results are fed back to relevant sectors through popular education work and publications. In 1982, CEASPA began publishing **Praxis**, a magazine which is an anthology of their work and which allows them to combine longer analyses of research topics (theory) with a section on popular education experiences and techniques (practice). There is a close link between CEASPA and CCS through both educational activities and materials production.

3. Popular Communication Centre - Honduras (CENCOPH)

This centre began its work in Honduras in the mid 1970's and today trains popular educators within specific sectors who then carry out the educational tasks with grass roots groups. They see their role as a three pronged one: to diagnose the needs of the organization; to help design an educational program appropriate to it; and to set up a training program for educators within the organization. The CENCOPH team is skilled in media work, especially radio, video, audio-visuals and production of print materials.

4. Rural Education and Promotion Centre - Nicaragua (CEPA)

CEPA began its work with the Christian Communities in Nicaragua's rural areas in the early 1970's. Their present day program includes training in popular education methodology for church groups, for state institutions, and for the grass roots *mass* organizations developed since 1979. CEPA's contributions to the rapid growth of popular education in revolutionary Nicaragua has been critical in two ways: strengthening of popular organizations by designing popular education programs that are multiplied from the national, to the regional, to the grass roots level; and setting up, with other organizations, a *methodological school* that trains key educational staff in a four-workshop series over a year.

5. Mexican Institute for Development and Community Education - (IMDEC)

IMDEC is one of the oldest popular education centres in Mexico whose efforts have been aimed at strategically linking educational work to key social projects. The IMDEC team uses popular education methodology in workshops with grass roots groups around specific social themes. The centre has developed audio-visual and print materials which are used extensively both inside and outside of Mexico. IMDEC plays a key role in the growth and development of a national network of popular educators.

6. The Permanent Team of Alforja - CEP - Costa Rica

The Alforja permanent staff as described earlier has primary responsibility for the coordinating and support functions related to the network. However, it is also engaged in direct programming with popular groups in Costa Rica, and in materials production.

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We'd like to know...

It is our hope that this booklet will stimulate new ideas and applications to popular education work in different sectors.

We would like to know how you have used this material and how you think we can keep the exchange alive. The questions below suggest some areas we'd like your reflections on. You may want to send along successful program designs or techniques, evaluations, or popular education materials that represent your own work in this growing field. Perhaps this initial exchange of experiences and materials will suggest another booklet to reflect our ongoing work in Canada.

What parts (aspects) of the booklet did you find most useful? Why?

Describe any applications you have made of ideas presented in this booklet. (Clarify **who** you were working with and **for what** purpose. What worked well? What didn't work well? Why? What changes did you make?

What other resources have you found useful in your popular education work? (books, audio-visuals, etc.)

What groups/persons do you know who could contribute to and benefit from an exchange of popular education experiences? (include addresses)

How do you think popular educators can best support each other in this work? (e.g. forms of networks, workshops, bulletins, publications, etc.)

Tear out this page and
send your comments to:

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